



# DIM LIGHTS MOVE WILL CUT COSTS

Report by Heather Large

**THOUSANDS** more street lights across Dudley can now be dimmed as part of a £4.5 million project to save money.

Lamps in the borough have been fitted with new energy-saving LED lanterns as part of a move to cut the council's energy bills.

Now 26,000 of the council's 32,000 street lights can be controlled to save energy and 19,400 of these can be dimmed.

It is estimated the move could save £100,000 during the next financial year.

Two years ago the council began the project to upgrade the borough's lamps with lights that use around half the energy. The £4.5m was also spent on a new computer system.

By swapping traditional bulbs for LED (light-emitting diode), maintenance costs for the lamps are also much lower.

Lighting levels can be cut at night using a dimming device when there is less traffic.

In total around 27,000 lights will be converted or replaced as part of the project.

The council's chief executive Sarah Norman said: "The Street Lighting Central Management System (CMS) was fully commissioned and operational in April 2013 and conversion of the street lighting stock continues.

"As at August 24, 26,000 of the council's 32,000 street lights can now be controlled via the CMS system remotely to help save energy; 19,400 of these can be dimmed.

Spend is forecast to be within budget and completion of the scheme is expected during financial year 2015/16."

The central management system gives council workers greater control of the lights via a radio-controlled telecell device, which is controlled through the computer system.

## Trial

Before the project began a trial was carried out on the Priory estate which saw 100 outdated lamps replaced with modern white lights.

The team piloted 10 different types of energy-saving fittings in roads in the Priory area to establish which option offers best value for money.

During the past two years, the council has also spent thousands of pounds replacing dangerous or outdated lampposts.

Last year the council revealed plans to turn off lights after midnight in some areas from 2016 onwards.

Bosses hope it makes little difference as most people are in bed between midnight and 5am.

Dudley Council is not the only authority working to reduce energy costs.

Across the border in Sandwell, thousands of street lights are also being fitted with new energy-saving devices at a cost of £1.8m.

Sandwell Council says the move will slash £400,000 from its annual energy bills.

## A BLOOMING BIG VICTORY FOR FLOWER POWER



Halesowen in Bloom Chairman Eve O'Connor with volunteer Amanda Hodgetts and committee member Steve Fitzpatrick in Somers Square

FLOWER power has won the day in Halesowen after the town scooped a gold award in the annual Heart of England In Bloom competition.

Organisers and volunteers pulled everything out the grow bag to ensure the win, after being only four per cent off the prestigious gilt last year. Shop fronts, gardens and buildings have all been transformed by colourful floral creations.

It was announced that Halesowen had won gold in the Urban judging category last week. Eve O'Connor, chairman of Halesowen in

Bloom, said: "We are all blooming over the moon. I couldn't be more delighted as our hard work has really paid off.

"On our Facebook page we have had so many positive comments and likes and shares. The feedback has overwhelmed us.

## Improvement

"We have now got to maintain our high standards for next year, as there are always areas of improvement. We are really looking forward to another year of getting out there and getting everyone in the town involved."

Judges from Heart of England visited the town on July 15. The campaign saw gardens, buildings and shop fronts transformed by colourful floral displays.

Halesowen Flower Club prepared displays to celebrate the Battle of Britain and the Women's Institute anniversaries.

Mrs O'Connor was also awarded a Special Merit Award. She added: "I was really shocked to have won as there was only about four or five others who were awarded it - it was incredibly special."

## FESTIVE

### Appeal launched for town's display

A CAMPAIGN has been launched towards the £13,000 cost of the Christmas lights in Halesowen.

Members of the town's chamber of trade are urging companies to get behind the annual appeal.

They hope a dazzling display of lights will help attract thousands of shoppers into the town to pick up their festive gifts.

Around 43,000 came to the town centre for last year's switch-on ceremony.

Businesses are being asked to back the appeal through sponsorship. This year's switch-on will be on November 21.

## STABBING

### Five arrested after man seriously hurt

FIVE people were arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after a man was found with serious stab wounds in Cradley Heath.

Two other men were arrested for affray after the victim, in his 20s, suffered head and chest injuries in an attack in Littlehill Crescent on Friday.

All seven were freed on bail on Sunday pending further inquiries.

Police said the man suffered 'life changing injuries' and was in a serious but stable condition in hospital.

## DAMAGE

### Pub has opened again after blaze

A PUB in Cradley Heath that sustained damage in a fire has re-opened.

The Moon Under Water, in High Street, was closed all day Friday and on Saturday morning following the blaze in the early hours of Friday. It was believed to have been started by a discarded cigarette.

The fire caused damage to the front entrance of the Wetherspoons pub, its structure and sign.

The pub, which has around 30 staff, was closed at the time.

Ashley Bater, manager, said: "It was just a small section at the front of the pub that was damaged but we are open as usual."

## INSIDE

### GRAND SLAM JOY FOR JORDANNE



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# Wedding fraudster is told to pay £1



Sarah Cawthorne: tagged

A BUSINESSWOMAN who cheated brides out of more than £122,000 by spending their money on gambling sites and a trip to Disney World will only have to pay back £1.

Around 100 couples were 'left high and dry' by Sarah Cawthorne and her A Little Bit of Bling business, which had promised to provide glitzy finishing touches to their big day.

She was jailed for 12 months for fraudulent trading at Wolverhampton Crown Court in April.

It is believed at least 100 brides-to-be throughout the UK were defrauded of

more than £30,000 between July 2012 and September 2013.

But since then, investigations by Dudley Trading Standards have revealed that Cawthorne, of Hickmerelands Lane, Sedgley, actually gained £122,434 in total from her criminal actions, as further victims have been identified.

The mother-of-two claimed to have been suffering from a gambling addiction at the time of the offence. She served part of that sentence in prison before being released on licence and now wears an electronic tag.

Cawthorne, aged 32, appeared at the

court last week for a hearing under the Proceeds of Crime Act. That aims to to claw back money from assets belonging to criminals.

But Ms Emma Brotherford, prosecuting, revealed that an agreement had been struck between Dudley Council and Cawthorne.

"The defendant has no assets and a nominal order for £1 is sought," Ms Rutherford said.

Judge John Walsh replied: "If there is no realisation of assets then £1 must be paid within 28 days or one day in lieu of custody."

# Ex-boyfriend is jailed for revenge porn image

A MAN from Wordsley who changed his ex-girlfriend's Facebook profile picture to a graphic image, taken while they were a couple, has been jailed for 10 months under new 'revenge porn' laws.

Samuel Bishop also sent the picture to eight other social network users, including friends, family and work colleagues of his victim.

Dudley Magistrates Court last week jailed Bishop for the offences, saying they were a serious breach of trust. Bishop showed no emotion as he was taken away to begin his sentence.

The court was told the victim had 'felt sick to her stomach' upon realising what Bishop, aged 29, had done.

Bishop and his victim had been in a relationship but had split up. He continued to victimise her and was charged with battery in 2012. The court in Kidderminster was told that he had breached a restraining order in April 2013, leading to eight weeks in prison. There had been no further issues until May 24 this year when the victim woke up to find the intimate photograph had been sent to her new partner's phone.

Miss Val Hart, prosecuting, said: "The picture had been sent to eight different people including her new partner, friends, work colleagues and a family member – all male. She then checked Facebook and found the profile picture had also been changed."

## Sentenced

The victim deleted the picture but when she checked Facebook later the same day the profile picture had been changed back to the intimate photograph.

Miss Hart said the victim could not understand why Bishop wanted to hurt her. The photograph had been taken years before when they were still a couple.

Bishop, of Hamilton Drive, had pleaded guilty to two counts of disclosing private sexual photographs with intent to cause distress. He was sentenced to 20 weeks for each charge to be served consecutively and ordered to pay £2,000 compensation.

Mr Andrew Wakeman, defending, said his client had a problem with alcohol and it had led to 'a deep feeling of unhappiness'.

## Here we go again — pub fight back on



Friends of the Haden Cross with, from left, Jim Mumford, Stephanie Peacock and Tim Haskey at the front

CAMPAIGNERS have vowed to battle revived and revised plans for a Co-op store to be built on a pub car park in Cradley Heath – just months after the last bid was thrown out.

Regulars at the Haden Cross thought that they had successfully stopped developers when an application was rejected by Sandwell Council in January.

But New River Retail, who bought hundreds of Midlands pubs from Marstons, now claim to have

addressed issues that saw the original plan fail and have submitted a revised blueprint for a new store.

A public meeting was called by Friends of Haden Cross at the Halesowen Road pub last week with residents and councillors attending.

Chairman of the group, Tim Haskey, said that they had thought they had shaken developers off when the pub was granted Asset of Community Value (ACV) status by the council but the new proposal

had left them feeling downhearted.

The owners have suggested retaining more parking spaces for the pub and making the store's roof lower than the pub's

Mr Haskey said: "I am annoyed that they have come back. New River has proposed more spaces for the pub now from their original proposal but that is still a loss of the 16 spaces and our beer garden."

The Friends group is encouraging everyone to make fresh objections and to sign their new petition.

# Mayor first to sign book marking the record reign

DUDLEY'S Mayor has become the first borough resident to sign a special book commemorating Her Majesty the Queen's record reign on the British throne.

Last Wednesday, at around 5.30pm, Queen Elizabeth II officially became Britain's longest serving monarch, reigning longer than her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria.

The borough's first citizen, Councillor Steve Waltho, put pen to paper in the commemorative book which will be sent to the Queen.

The book will tour the borough with the Mayor on his civic engagements for people to add their good will messages before it is sent to Buckingham Palace next month.

More than 30 borough residents, born in 1952, have accepted an invitation to join the Mayor to sign the book at a civic reception at the Council House.

They were be joined by the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Peter Tomlinson.

Councillor Waltho said: "This is a great occasion for us to mark and I am delighted to have been part of this historic event by being the first to sign the commemorative book. It gives people the opportunity to pass on their well wishes to the Queen in what is a tremendous achievement."

The book will be available until October 12 and councillors will have the opportunity to sign it at a meeting of the full council. It will then be sent to the Royal family.

## Highlighting sight and hearing loss

AN event will highlight issues surrounding sight loss and health at Brierley Hill. Thomas Pocklington Trust hold a Sight and Health Fair with Beacon Centre for the Blind on Monday at Brierley Hill Civic Hall between 10am and 4pm.

It is a joint effort by the trust, a national sight loss charity with a resource centre in Stourbridge, and the Sedgley-based Beacon Centre for the Blind.

Organisations that have already pledged their support including SENSE, Dudley Healthwatch, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, The Alzheimer's Society and Parkinson's UK

The event also takes place as part of National Eye Health Week. For further details call the trust's Laura Hedley on (01384) 440333 or email [laura.hedley@pocklington-trust.org.uk](mailto:laura.hedley@pocklington-trust.org.uk)

## Body of man found near beauty spot

A MAN was found dead in bramble bushes near a beauty spot. Michael Hayes, aged 71, was found dead off Forge Lane, Sandwell Valley. His death is not believed to be suspicious. Relatives can call coroner's officer Stephen Binsley on 0121 5697205.

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# Father is facing jail for having a stun gun

A FATHER-OF-THREE faces at least five years in prison after being caught with an electric stun gun that was disguised as a mobile phone.

Banaris Ali also had a BB gas gun when police stopped his car in Hall Street, Dudley on March 9, a judge heard.

The 34-year-old from Fir Street, Dudley pleaded guilty to possession of the disguised firearm, the gas-powered gun and a quantity of cannabis when he appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

He further admitted drink driving and driving without insurance.

Mr Oliver Woolhouse, defending, explained that Ali has a family and runs a mobile valeting business.

## Reports

He added: "He knows the sort of sentence that could follow but wishes to make arrangements and put his affairs in order first."

The defendant was remanded on bail for reports until Tuesday, October 6, when the details of the case will be revealed in court.

But he was told by Judge Amjad Nawaz: "You should not read anything into the fact I have granted you bail."

"One of the offences which you have admitted carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years unless there are exceptional circumstances."

"It is almost certain that a custodial sentence will follow."

# Office block to be demolished

A FORMER office block in Upper Gornal that was once home to a computer training company will be demolished.

Tatton Hall Homes applied to Dudley Council for permission to bulldoze University House in Jews Lane.

The large office building is the former base of Computeach International which sells computer training worldwide. Most of the company's operation was moved to a new purpose-built block just yards away 15 years ago.

Dudley Council's planning officers rubber stamped the demolition project this week.

Tatton Hall Homes has yet to revealed exact plans for the site. New housing developments have been built nearby in recent years.

# Make bee-line for some sweet talk

A TALK is being held about bees and their influence on farming. The talk by Tony Break, called Liquid Gold, is at Wordsley Green Community Centre on Monday at 10am. Entrance £2.50 includes refreshments.

# New investigation into Christina's death



Schoolgirl Christina Edkins

THE family of Halesowen schoolgirl Christina Edkins, who was fatally stabbed on a Birmingham bus, say they have had little contact with medical officials — despite the launch of a new investigation into her death.

Bosses at NHS England (Midlands and East) has confirmed the probe had been commissioned and said it followed 'ongoing' meetings with the teen's family.

But Christina's great-uncle Chris Melia said there had only been a single short meeting with group officials back in January.

Christina, 16, was stabbed by para-

noid schizophrenic Phillip Simelane, of Walsall, while on her way to Leasowes High School. He was detained indefinitely under the Mental Health Act at a hearing at Birmingham Crown Court in October 2013.

A previous inquiry found the teenager's death could have been prevented if her killer had been given treatment but said his actions could not have been predicted.

Her family have disputed this, saying there is evidence to the contrary and are hoping this will be reflected in the results of the independent investigation.

Mr Melia said: "I would dispute there have been ongoing talks between us and NHS England. There was a single meeting in January which I believe lasted only an hour."

He said the family had recently received a letter informing them of the independent investigation. He added: "We hope this investigation will give us the answers we need."

Spokesman for NHS England (Midlands and East) Rosemary Cook said: "We have all the information that we need to begin an independent investigation. This has now been commissioned."

# Elderly face rise in day care cost due to cuts

ELDERLY people may have to pay more for services such as home visits, day care and luncheon clubs due to cuts planned by Dudley Council.

The authority currently has £5.3 million contracts for preventative care and support services.

But some of these face being slashed as the council will be getting less funding from Government.

Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen is among 65 organisations which could be hit. The group receives around £216,000 in funding each year to provide its services but will now have to re-tender for funding.

People using The Elton Centre in Stourbridge, Halesowen Day Centre in Green Lane, and a day care centre at Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice, currently pay around £8.50 a day. The fee goes towards luncheon clubs and activities. Bosses say this is less than similar organisations which can charge around £25.

Dudley Council says it will need to make funding cuts to the voluntary and community sectors through its service level agreements. But bosses vowed to ensure this happens without reducing front line services.

## Future

Age Concern chairman Ken Turner said the group did not want to have to put up prices for users but was worried about what the future may hold.

"It leaves a great deal of uncertainty as we are unsure about how much of the money will we continue to receive," he said. "It will be hard for organisations like ours to plan. We don't want to ask people for more money."

Councillor Dave Branwood, in charge of adult social care, said talks were ongoing with organisations.

"The amount of funding from central government to councils (Revenue Support Grant) decreases significantly over the coming financial years," he said.

"The council will need to carefully look at funding to some organisations as we make sure that the services we have meet the needs for local people. Before any decisions are made we will be working with local groups and speaking to people to look at the potential impact."

"The Care Act requires the council to ensure the quality of its support and consider any impact on the financial arrangements of these organisations."

## Jacquie puts on belly good show



Jacquie Hogwood, of Halesowen, with members of Habiba group, preparing for a belly dancing night

FROM Bollywood to belly dancing — a cancer survivor has organised a night of fun and dancing to raise money for Russells Hall Hospital.

Jacquie Hogwood, aged 68, from Halesowen, was diagnosed with breast cancer in February 2014 and the belly dancer of 17 years has invited people of all ages to shake their way along to her event in Dudley on November 14.

The show at The Venue in High Street includes a three-course

Asian or English buffet, as well as performances from bhangra and belly dancing troupes, including Jacquie and her group.

The night will raise funds to improve the waiting room at the Georgina Oncology Unit at the hospital.

She said: "The treatment at Russells Hall Hospital really has been amazing. You can't fault it, the nurses and doctors up there are truly wonderful. But the wait-

ing area is the most depressing and uncomfortable place ever and to be honest I did moan about it quite a lot. I felt should probably do something about it."

"What we want to do is have some nice refreshments, chairs and just make it a much nicer place to be."

Tickets are £20 each or £120 for a table of ten. Call Jacquie on 07801 277391, or The Venue on (01384) 459800.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## A New Look for men at Merry Hill

FASHION retailer New Look will open a new standalone menswear store at Merry Hill next month.

Fifteen jobs will be created by the business which will open its doors on October 7. More positions are expected to follow in the future.

It follows the opening of a new cafe which has also created 15 jobs at the shopping centre. Ultimate Cafe has been opened by The Interesting Eating Company on the ground floor of Ultimate Outdoors. The outdoor equipment chain took over the old Kiddicare shop in May.

## King Ed's reunion for class of 1975

A REUNION for the class of 1975 at Stourbridge's King Edward VI Grammar School is being held this month.

Organised by former student Julian Parkes, the event will be held at The Crabmill pub in Oldswinford on Saturday, September 26, from 7pm.

Mr Parkes said it would be an informal get-together to share memories from 40 years ago for those who "wore the Subbuteo-cloth green blazers".

The event is aimed at the last intake of the old 11-plus pupils but all former pupils from around that time are welcome. Call Julian on 07932 823190.

## NHS Trust meeting and a health fair

DUDLEY and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust will hold its annual general meeting on Thursday, September 24.

The meeting will be held at Walsall College's Wisemore campus at 1.30pm and will feature a review of the year.

The public are invited to attend to find out more about the trust's performance and future plans. Before the meeting, there will be a wellbeing fair opening at 11am with free health checks and information stalls.

## Great Scott — talk on world famous explorer

THERE will be an illustrated talk in Stourbridge tonight (Thu) on the explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott and his ill-fated 1912 expedition to the South Pole.

It marks Stourbridge Historical Society's next meeting.

Andrew Lound will present To the Ends of the Earth: Scott of the Antarctic in the Wollaston Room at Stourbridge Town Hall on at 7.30pm.

There will be a £3 admission fee for non-members of the society.

## Church battle service

A SERVICE of thanksgiving to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain is being held in a Dudley church. The service at St Thomas and St Luke, in Vicar Street, known as Top Church, is on Sunday at 11.30am, to remember the air crews whose sacrifice halted Nazi invasion plans.

## Independent Family Owned Funeral Directors

### About The Company

Trevor EW Hickton Funeral Directors are a long established firm based in Cradley Heath. Formerly know as J.E.W. Hickton & Sons the company was established in 1909 and has been serving Cradley Heath, Halesowen and all the surrounding towns and areas since. In 1909 Joe Hickton a well known carpenter, builder, undertaker, local councillor and one time Mayor of Rowley Regis, opened a dedicated funeral home located in Lower High Street, Cradley Heath to focus on the funeral directing side of business. Along with his wife Rose, the local midwife. They became a large part of the local community, with the local saying being "she brings them in to the world, and he takes them out!" Their son William 'Bill' Hickton came in to the business in 1937 and the father and son partnership began carrying out funerals across Cradley Heath and the surrounding areas, with Bill eventually taking over the business in 1957 after Joe retired. Bill's son Trevor came in to the business in 1971 working closely with his father to continue building the company reputation.

Trevor inherited J. E. W. Hickton Funeral Directors after his father Bill passed away in 2000. In 2005 the company was registered as a Limited UK company along with a name change to what it is today, Trevor E.W. Hickton Ltd Funeral Directors. Trevor's son Ross came in to the business in 2006,

followed by his other son Greg in 2010 and finally by his daughter Jodie in 2014

The family all work together along with a team of long standing and hard working staff The office staff comprise of former Springfield Post Office manager Mandy Parsons, who looks after the on going funeral arrangements assisted by Jodie, and Kate Davis who has worked for the company for 15 years. Kate is also the company Stone Masonry manager.

In 2014 a brand new dedicated funeral home was built on the grounds of the original funeral home in Lower High Street, to support the needs of the business. Now with three private chapels of rest, three family arrangement rooms and a private working office. The company is able to cater to all needs and requirements of their clients in a friendly and inviting funeral home.

In 2015 the decision was made to renovate the funeral home in Colley Gate with a new reception area and particularly a new shop frontage.

The office name was changed to incorporate the Hickton name as many local families were using the office who had before came to Hicktons in Cradley Heath at their time of need, they now have a closer location

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## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



INTERESTING, isn't it, how we reveal our opinions about the monarchy in the way we describe the Queen? Do you think of her as the "longest-serving" monarch or the "longest-reigning"?

A NUMBER of you have pointed out that if we had a republican system we might well be ruled over by President Blair and First Lady Cherie. If that happened, there wouldn't be all this agonising about when the Chilcot Report would be published. Never.

MY local bargain-basement shop is asking a mere 99p for its magnetic car tax-disc holders. Good luck with that.

I AM convinced there is a military-misrepresentation department in the BBC whose job is to irritate old soldiers by slipping deliberate mistakes into TV drama. What else could account for basic errors such as squaddies saluting each other while wearing civilian clothes, as seen in Sherlock, or Private Mellors (Richard Madden) sporting a full beard in the First World War trenches in Sunday's adaptation of Lady Chatterley's Lover? British soldiers shave. Tricky to say but easy to remember.



BRITAIN is not exactly Tornado Alley, is it? We may get a few gales per year but the Met Office's plan to give them all names, as in the United States, seems wildly over the top. The pilot scheme this winter will have alternating male and female names, running from A to Z. The theory is that giving a storm a name increases public awareness. Really? Or is the truth that we just like copying whatever the Yanks do? Here's an all-British alternative which avoids any confusion and spares us the effort of selecting suitable names. We will have Storm One, Storm Two, Storm Three, and so on. Simple, innit?

AS the eternally cash-strapped NHS scratches around to fund weekend GP care and hospital cover, I spotted an advert for a couple of non-executive directors for one trust. The pay is £12,000 per year – but you only have to work four days a month. That's the way the money goes.

**Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star**

# United in celebrating life of football legend

FOOTBALL fans have welcomed news of a major celebration event in Dudley marking the life of Dudley-born England and Manchester United player Duncan Edwards.

Edwards, who had been tipped to follow Wolves hero Billy Wright as England skipper, died at 21 from injuries in the 1958 Munich air disaster.

A plane containing the United team, supporters and journalists crashed at the Germany city's airport after a stop to refuel on the way back to England following a match against Red Star Belgrade.

The statue which stands in his honour has been given new prominence in the heart of the historic Dudley market place.

After its move across the market place to the Castle Street side as part of a £6 million market revamp, a re-dedication ceremony and service is being held at the statue on October 1.

### Magnificent

Brian Mulholland of the Manchester United Supporters' Club said the occasion would be fitting for a footballing legend.

"The service will be a very special day in commemorating a football genius, who, had he lived, would most definitely have been hailed as one of the greatest footballers of all time," he said.

"Sincere thanks go to Dudley Council for all their hard work in organising this magnificent honour."

by Andrew Turton

"On a personal level, myself and two friends, together with our wives, travel to Munich every February to attend a memorial service for the Busby Babes."

The event on Thursday, October 1, is from 10.45am, on what would have been the player's 79th birthday.

It will blend a commemoration of Edwards' achievements, a civic ceremony and celebration of today's talent.

The player's relatives will be guests of honour and there will be a demonstration of football skills by freestyler Colin Neil.

The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Steve Waltho, will give a welcoming address before Rev Andrew Wickens of Top Church in Dudley (St Thomas and St Luke) leads a floral tribute and two minutes of silence.

Mr Edwards, who grew up on the Priory estate, was among a group of rising young United players nicknamed The Busby Babes, after manager Matt Busby.

## A wee dram of £43,000 whisky



Jerome Marks-Gardener with the £43,000 bottle of whisky

A VERY special bottle of whisky with an eye-watering £43,000 price tag has gone on display at a wine merchants in Stourbridge.

The 50-year-old Macallan single malt, which is pricier than most family cars, is on show at Nickolls and Perks.

It works out at around £1,869 for a wee dram of the whisky, which is the first in a limited edition made in a collaboration between distillers Macallan and French crystal experts Lalique.

Nickolls and Perks had a similar bottle in the shop three years ago, which sold for £15,000 – so the whisky has nearly tripled in value.

Marketing manager Tim Robbins said: "It was one of an edition of 470. Macallan are working with Lalique to produce a series of six editions and this was the very first one, which goes back around six years."

The whisky comes from Macallan's distillery in Speyside. The bottle was acquired on behalf of a collector by the store, which is organising the Midlands Whisky Festival tomorrow (Fri) and Saturday at Stourbridge Town Hall. It will feature some 40 exhibitors and around 300 drams.

## Councils willing to take in refugees

MORE than 100 Syrian refugees are estimated to be coming to the Black Country and Staffordshire, as councils work out how to help and house them.

Wolverhampton council alone is predicting around 20 people will make up its share of 20,000 refugees the UK has pledged to take. Similar numbers are likely in Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell, based on the size of the population – if councils agree to accept them.

Birmingham City Council has offered places for 50. It comes as petitions have been started urging councils to take in refugees fleeing Syria's brutal civil war.

But local authority bosses are concerned that Government funding is only guaranteed for a year.

The arrivals will be given a one-off allowance of £200 each for clothing while councils aim to house refugees in private rented homes.

Councils will also get funding to provide English language courses for refugees, social care costs and extra funding for schools to cater for more pupils.

Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe said the authority had not yet decided how many to accept but it would be around the same number as Wolverhampton. Sandwell Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper said a decision had not yet been made but would depend on what funding the Government would offer.

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Anya Morris, aged two, waves her Union flags as she enjoys the music



Daisy Delaney, front, and Neil Payne, Emma and Gavin Delaney from Halesowen



Tea for two — Barbara and Don Hall from Netherton enjoy a cuppa at the Proms



Trumpeter Gary Bell with museum staff Jane Hanney, left, and Alison Hyatt



Susan Ball from The Wirral was visiting cousin Carol Turner from Halesowen

# Pride is Prom-inent

THERE was plenty of patriotic flag-waving and rousing tunes as music lovers flocked to a Proms in the Park event in Cradley Heath.

Hundreds packed into Haden Hill House Museum and Park to hear a feast of music including a performance by Halesowen Brass Band.

There was soul and jazz from the five-piece Martinique Jazz Band and easy listening songs from Ian Casey. Visitors were able to enjoy a

picnic while listening to an array of toe-tapping tunes and many got into the Proms spirit by waving Union flags.

The event was one of many taking place as part of the Heritage Open Days scheme which saw landmarks throw open their doors to visitors.

Museum services manager Jane Hanney said the Proms had been a great success.

"We had hundreds of hundreds of people – it was brilliant. We had a variety of different music

from jazz to pop tunes to crooner songs. We had all the Proms classics at the end when people were waving their flags and balloons along with the music including Land of Hope and Glory. We had a lot of people come along who had never visited the Haden Hill House – they didn't even know it was here – so it was nice to welcome them too."

Visitors were also able to get a rare glimpse inside adjoining Haden Old Hall, which is seldom open to the public.



Anne Smart, Colin Stevens and Anne Benney, all friends of the park, wave their flags

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



# Cameron's blindness to needs of provinces

NO doubt David Cameron's unfortunate quip about folk from different parts of Yorkshire hating one another because they had put so many rival bids in for government cash was a casual aside, never intended to offend anybody, and which will probably be quickly forgotten.

It does, though, give an interesting insight into how little understanding the London-centric political class has of provincial Britain.

It seems Mr Cameron was surprised that people in different parts of Yorkshire had different priorities, and wanted money for their own localities rather than cutting a deal among themselves about where the money should go. But Yorkshire is a huge county. Just how would pouring money into the south of the county, which is basically the East Midlands, benefit somebody in the Dales?

It's no different here. While there is a lot of talk about devolution at the moment, it all sounds like anything but. Instead of local councillors looking after their own patches, we are pretty much being told that the only way the West Midlands will get the sort of money that London does is by forming some kind of regional authority. While it might not be called "Greater Birmingham", that is inevitably how Westminster will see it. Last week the West Midlands' new transport plan was announced, which was as predictable as it was depressing. High speed rail and a glitzy new station for Birmingham, and oh, yes, a few bendy buses for Sandwell and Dudley. That will kick-start the Black Country economy, won't it?

London-centred politicians assume that the rest of Britain really wants to be like London, and that fiercely independent towns and cities with very little in common bar an accident of geography, can all be lumped together to form some sort of artificial region.

CONGRATULATIONS to Wonderbra tycoon Michelle Mone on her elevation to the House of Lords. But don't you think it's a shame that Lord Sewel was booted out before he ever got the chance to try out her latest lines?

WOLVERHAMPTON'S former Netto store looks set to face the bulldozers. The Scandinavian supermarket chain was told to move out in 2007, to make way for the Summer Row scheme which never went ahead, and in 2011 the council spent £50,000 on repairs to the property. Wulfrunians will no doubt be very pleased that the eyesore building, previously home to the Clarkson and later Rackhams department stores, is now to finally bite the dust.

And eight years after Netto was forced to close its doors, maybe somebody could finally get round to removing all the road signs for the supermarket?



Linda Frazier from West Bromwich meets Jasper Carrott



Chief Executive Toby Lewis at the memorial unveiling



Jasper's wife donated her kidney to their daughter Lucy

# Jasper talks from the heart about donation

The unveiling of a memorial to organ donors meant something extra special for Jasper Carrott. **CLARE BUTLER** reports

**"THIS monument means that anyone can come at anytime to sit and think about a loved one."**

Those were the words of Birmingham comedian Jasper Carrott at the unveiling of City Hospital's memorial area for organ donors.

Jasper spoke to 15 families at the event last Wednesday, explaining how his wife Hazel, who he has been married to for more than four decades, donated an organ to their actress daughter Lucy Davis in 1997.

Lucy underwent a kidney transplant after being diagnosed with kidney failure.

He recalled the day the operation took place, saying: "I remember I was actually doing a show at the NEC in Birmingham when the operation was taking place. It was an emotional and traumatic time.

"My wife donated her kidney to my daughter and I'm pleased to say that she has been very healthy since.

**Successful**

"She has followed to the letter what doctors have told her to do in order to look after it, and it has meant she has had a life and incredible career.

"She is a glowing example of having a successful transplant, and although my experience may not have been as dramatic as what no doubt a lot of you have been through here today - I can relate."

Hospital bosses and families were touched by Jasper's personal recollection, yet it wasn't long before he got the crowds laughing with a touch of humour too.

"Whenever my daughter was a little more irritable after the transplant we would say it was the transplant causing the menopause," he joked. Lucy, now aged 42, has since gone on to star in notable film and TV roles including



Veteran comedian and television personality, Jasper Carrott, unveils a memorial at City Hospital, Birmingham, in honour of those who donated organs enabling others to live

The Office and zombie comedy Shaun of the Dead.

The ceremony saw a heart-shaped stone monument, plaque and seated reflection area revealed in honour of the organ donors and their families.

During National Transplant Week, last week, family members were keen to re-iterate the importance of speaking to loved ones about organ donation.

Christine Rock, from West Bromwich, who lost her husband, John in 2011 at the age of 69 spoke of how she knew her family had to fulfil his wishes.

She said: "Four years ago my husband had a stroke and was taken into hospital but sadly didn't pull through.

"He always carried a donor card with him, so although it was a trying time for us and especially our daughter, we were always aware

of his wishes and wanted to fulfil them.

"His heart tissue went on to save five neonatal babies.

"To be able to come here today and see so many families who were in a similar position to us has been lovely. Jasper was incredibly touching and down to earth too."

Following his speech, 70-year-old Jasper took time to speak to each family, before posing for pictures beside the monument, where family members also placed flowers.

Inscribed on the stone were the words 'A gift of life' with the bench quote reading 'Words are not always necessary - comfort comes from the meeting of hearts.'

Dr John Bleasdale, clinical lead for organ donation at the hospital, said: "This monument celebrates the people who said 'I do' to organ donation. We are eternally grateful to them and their families and this can be a place



Eathan Rock-Sawyer aged eight and his gran Christine Rock from West Bromwich

for them to sit, reflect and contemplate as well as a being a mark of remembrance.

"We want to encourage better communication between families about speaking about organ donation. I am sure that is it is discussed more, then families will be more open to saying yes."

The National Transplant Week campaign was encouraging people to say 'I do' to organ donation. Donors can make the decision to declare donation after their death or by giving a living donation by choosing to donate a kidney, a small section of liver or discarded bone from a hip or knee replacement.

Every year across the country around a thousand people die waiting for a transplant.

However, only four per cent of people regularly give blood and only a third have joined the organ donor register. For more information visit [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)

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# Let's deal with root cause of the problem

I'M in no doubt that my comments in this letter will cause horror, disgust and offence amongst the more hysterical of your readership.

And the hysteria, it seems, has even infected our Prime Minister and affected his previously sound judgement on this matter.

In little over 24 hours he switched from being someone who didn't think that allowing more refugees and asylum seekers into this country was the solution to the world's migrant crisis problem, to someone who now obviously does!

## Promote care, not help to die

IS this choice? I see Rob Marris feebly defends his Assisted Dying Bill by saying he is not promoting death but promoting choice.

Really? What is the choice? To be told that you are terminally ill with a short life expectancy and being aware of the financial constraints of an overstretched NHS and being aware of the distress family and friends are going through seeing a loved one with a terminal illness, the logical decision is easy to make.

But at a person's most vulnerable time should they really have to face that dilemma? In a civilised society shouldn't we support and care for them rather than assisting them into a premature death?

Many terminally ill patients do live quality lives well beyond expectation.

This is not choice, this is fait accompli!

**T LUXTON**  
Dudley

The reason for his sudden conversion, of course, was the image of a child's body washed up on a beach, the showing of which on the front pages of some newspapers probably having more to do with selling said newspapers than any sympathetic feelings on the part of their editors.

The image was sad and shocking, but some things need to be said, no matter how upsetting and heartless they may sound to those who are prepared to let their hearts overrule their heads.

So far this year hundreds of men, women, children and babies have

drown making the same journey that this child and his brother, mother and father were attempting and many bodies have never been found.

It doesn't make this child's death any less tragic, of course, but please let's keep a sense of perspective. It still doesn't alter the fact, as originally stated by David Cameron, that allowing thousands more of them into this country is not dealing with the root causes of the problem.

**R A SARGEANT**  
Dudley

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

## Don't drone on about jihadi deaths

WE hear that a drone strike has killed a British jihadi. Inevitably, the British bleeding heart industry gears itself up to ask questions. Should we be carrying out this kind of attack? Is it a judicial killing? Are we in breach of International law? Should there be a judicial inquiry?

It appears that it's okay to use air strikes against ISIS and to kill Jihadis in a generalised way but let's not pick on perhaps the most dangerous of their number who can cause the UK the greatest harm.

We are told that Muslims in South Wales are against ISIS but that they are not happy at some bloodthirsty fighter being targeted like this.

Any time now, I dare say, we will have the Archbishop's bishops telling us that all men are our brothers. It's okay to endanger the lives of our brave RAF but with a drone, it's just not a level playing field. So how do these people think we should expunge the jihadi Johns of this world? The implication is that somehow we arrest them and bring them back for trial. Good luck with that one!

I am in total awe at the professionalism shown by those carrying out of this project.

**A M ETHERIDGE**  
Sedgley

## You have to know heartbreak

RE Assisted dying. Mr Rob Marris gets my full support for his bill.

Have the religious leaders not wanting this ever sat with their loved ones longing for their life to end?

I visited my husband in hospital on a Saturday night in 2009. On my visit my husband asked me to promise if he came out of hospital again, this was his fourth time that year, if I would go with him to Switzerland to end his life. Sadly on the Wednesday he got his wish and passed away.

Heartbreaking and a very sad time but would have been more heartbreaking if we had travelled to Switzerland knowing we wouldn't be bringing him back.

If assisted dying bill had been passed then, I could have brought him back to die in his own home. If you haven't been through this you really don't know what it's like and how heart-breaking it is.

**A CARWRIGHT**  
Dudley

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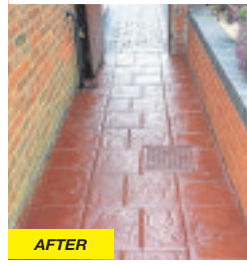
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The town hall packed for the return of the Red Lemon Electric Blues Band



Adrian Chiles and Suzi Perry join their former band mates at the reunion gig in Stourbridge



The brass section Bryan Corbett and Paul Roberts on stage on Friday night



The band's singer and founder Jim Merris in action on Friday night



The band's former manager and gig organiser Tony Perry from Finchfield

# Stars bring Lemon aid

A BLACK Country rhythm and blues band rolled the years at a sell-out anniversary gig with two famous former members joining them on stage at Stourbridge Town Hall.

The Red Lemon Electric Blues Band were greeted with cheers as they took to the stage for their 30th anniversary gig, one of two over the weekend. They were introduced on Friday night by TV sports presenters Suzi Perry and Adrian Chiles.

Suzi used to appear as a dancer on stage with the Red Lemons, who her father, Tony, used to manage. Adrian, from Hagley, featured as a bass player in an early line-up of the group.

Adrian said: "I used to play very badly and I was due to perform with the group on stage at the gig. Unfortunately I was out of the country so missed the rehearsal. I've decided, probably to everyone's relief, to limit myself to introducing the band along with Suzi."

Suzi said: "I have done a lot of things but some of the best times of my life have been with the band. When I drove into Stourbridge for the gig I got the same old feeling of excitement. It seemed like no time had passed at all."

Frontman and founder Jim Merris, 51, of Quarry Bank, said: "There has been a real buzz. Before the show I had to pop back home just to get my head together for a few minutes. It has been wonderful and I was delighted Suzi and Adrian could be with us."

The group were formed in 1985 after Jim was inspired by the hit movie The Blues Brothers starring Dan Ackroyd and John Belushi, which featured music from a host of soul, blues and jazz legends.

The band were regulars on the local gig scene in the 1980s and 90s, and supported rock 'n' roll great Chuck Berry on tour.



Saxophonist Rob Hughes lets rip as the soul band hit their stride

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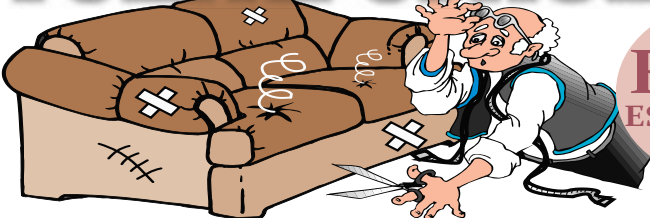
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# Brave Jack is inspiration for dad's fundraiser run



Go on dad! Teacher Adam South gets encouragement with his training from his three-year-old son Jack

**A FATHER** from Cradley Heath is gearing up to run the Great Birmingham Half-Marathon after being inspired by his son who suffers from a rare disease.

Adam South's three-year-old son, Jack, contracted Kawasaki's Disease at eight months old.

He was one of the first children to be diagnosed with the disease at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley. The condition causes inflammation in the walls of arteries, including the coronary arteries which supply blood to the heart.

Mr South, aged 31, from Waterfall Lane, will be running the marathon for Birmingham charity Young at Heart on October 18, which supports families of babies and children with heart defects.

He said: "Young at Heart were amazing to us. They offered support on the phone and via text and we could connect with families that also had children who suffered with heart conditions."

Mr South, a teacher at Hurst Green Primary School in Halesowen, and wife Kate have one other child, Lucas.

Kawasaki's Disease has left Jack with three aneurysms, which require

constant treatment. "When you look at Jack he is just like the other children," said Mr South. "He has to take his medicine four times a day but does it like a real trooper."

"We know that he is different from the other children health-wise, but he is really sensible and understands things. We are incredibly proud of him."

He added: "I've had so much support, it's been great. I'll be running it with my brother, Oliver, too so it will be a team effort."

Mr South is raising money via his appeal page at [www.justgiving.com/Adam-South2](http://www.justgiving.com/Adam-South2)

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## Sad death of Betty is announced

Quarry Bank E TWG

CHAIRMAN Mrs Wright welcomed 29 members and one visitor to the August meeting. It was with sadness that she told of the death of long-standing member Betty Johnson.

Betty was an enthusiastic member of the guild, willing to participate in all activities, always cheerful and helpful.

Betty's death was sudden and unexpected after a very short illness. She will be very much missed by everyone.

The meeting then proceeded as usual.

Social Secretary Mrs Writtle said the proposed visit to the National Memorial Arboretum had been cancelled due to lack of support. Names were taken of members wishing to participate in the Harvest Lunch and the date and venue of the Christmas Dinner was announced. It will be on Tuesday December 1 at Vesuvio Restaurant, Stourbridge.

Mrs Margaret Bunn gave information on arts and crafts meeting to be held at Norton Community Centre.

## A happy occasion in spite of closure

The Black Country Society

THE June meeting at St Mary's Church Hall was the last one of the Kingswinford branch, which has been unable to fill the roles of chairman, treasurer and secretary.

Members and friends present included chairman of the main society James Morgan. President Stan Hill was not well enough to attend, and Dave Galley, president of the main society was unable to attend.

Chairman Joan White and treasurer Linda Button have held offices for more than 30 years and secretary Alison Jones decided to resign from this meeting.

Linda thanked the chairman for her loyalty and support and presented her with a Black Country book by Michael Pearson.

The financial statement from Linda said attendance had fallen and entrance fees did not cover fees for speakers. There are also many local societies using the same speakers with the same subjects, thus reducing numbers, so it was decided to close the branch.

An excellent performance of the Cradley Heath Male Voice Choir followed, with Conductor Philippa Brettell and pianist Cynthia Partridge.

A buffet supper with wine followed to which choir members were invited. This all helped to make the last meeting a happy occasion.

## Garden birds theme of talk

Wall Heath Horticultural Guild

THE Guild held their usual monthly meeting at Wall Heath Community Centre in Envile Road on Tuesday, September 1.

As usual the meeting was friendly and vibrant with an excellent speaker for the occasion Mr David Tidswell who gave a very informative and exciting talk on garden birds in autumn and winter.

He gave advice on how best to feed them and attract them to our gardens. Most interestingly he spoke on the length of life which they might have, which we do all wonder about, considering that they are constantly pursued by predators.

He also spoke of diminishing habitats for them.

We could all do a little to help by encouraging them to our gardens with good food which he advised on.

Chairman Amanda Ridney updated members about the Wall Heath Show.

The guild is increasing in number due to the excellent quality of speakers engaged for meetings during the year, an annual day trip, very pleasant supper evenings and great ideas to share and enjoy. Visitors are welcome.

## Speaker Ken steps into the breach

THE last two meetings of Hawne TG before the summer break were quite hectic.

The programme for both meetings had to be changed. At the June meeting the speaker was changed at very short notice.

Ken Smith from the Friends of Haden House stepped into the breach. Ably assisted by his wife, he talked

Hawne TG

about the wonderful work done by the Friends of Haden Hill park and of some of the problems they have encountered.

Guild secretary Sandra Matchett, who carried the West Midlands banner and was the West Midlands Federation

delegate at the recent National AGM at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow, gave her report on the meeting. She said it was an honour to carry the banner.

In July the committee surprised the members with a strawberry, cream and scones tea party. This was followed by fun, games and songs, starting with a quiz and followed by Irish bingo.

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# Now new leader can get to work



**REJOICE** – the Labour leadership contest is over. Now, can we get on with the business of politics?

It has been four long months since the morning after the General Election, when a forlorn-looking Ed Miliband took responsibility for leading his party to its worst result since 1987 and bid a dignified retreat to the backbenches.

Since then Milifandom gave way to (Jeremy) Corbynmania and the three other contenders for the Labour leadership all promised a bold, new direction while doing their best to conveniently ignore their own high profile positions in the run up to their party's crushing result.

## Pastime

It was difficult to take any of them seriously given that none of them ever managed to persuade Ed Miliband to change tactics and not snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. The last four months were about Labour talking almost exclusively to and about itself. A favourite pastime for many was branding anyone who supported a rival candidate a Tory. "You like Liz Kendall? You're a Blairite and therefore a Tory."

"Oh, you prefer Jeremy Corbyn? Well that's the candidate the Tories want so you must be a Tory." And so on.

At least watching Labour leadership voters, whether full members or the



Ed Miliband in Brierley Hill



New Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

£3 registered supporters, argue with each other online has had an air of authenticity to it, of passion and of a frank exchange of ideas.

Almost every event during the General Election was stage-managed and choreographed to within an inch of its life.

People put in front of the shadow cabinet seemed to have been vetted so much they must have felt like wounded animals hoping not to be put down.

The Tories were no better, of course, but I do wonder how much more Ed Miliband could have achieved had he not spent the afternoon of the last Sunday before polling day in a cafe in Brierley Hill especially hired for the occasion and surrounded by Labour members and campaigners.

He told everyone present how there

were only hours left to win the election, having made them take the best part of two hours out of their day to wait for and listen to him tell them how the clock was ticking. Did no-one think it might have been better to actually talk to the voters, the ones who they wanted to put them into power?

Now Labour's new leader Corbyn can get to work. There are four years and eight months until the next General Election. And instead of just debating with each other about who within the party can win it, it might be worth listening to what the voters want and then working out how to deliver it. They've had stranger policies than that.

What are the qualities that make the deputy leader of a major political party? Too numerous to squeeze into a mere tweet, I'm sure.

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5th - 9th	CORNWALL'S ST IVES	<b>£279.50</b>
10th - 11th	WIM DUXFORD & BLETCHLEY PARK	<b>£139.50</b>
12th - 16th	TENBY & SCENIC PEMBROKESHIRE	<b>£315.00</b>
17th - 19th	GREAT ENGLISH GARDENS & PALACES	<b>£129.50</b>
24th - 25th	SCENIC SETTLE - CARLISLE RAILWAY	<b>£129.50</b>
26th - 30th	ISLE OF WIGHT	<b>£295.00</b>

### NOVEMBER

2nd - 6th	LOOE & POLPERRO	<b>£295.00</b>
8th - 9th	BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS	<b>£99.50</b>
9th - 13th	PRE-CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES	<b>£249.50</b>
12th - 13th	THURSFORD CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR	<b>£169.50</b>
13th - 16th	WESTON SUPER MARE CARNAVAL	<b>£195.00</b>
14th - 15th	CHRISTMAS AT CHATSWORTH HOUSE	<b>£115.00</b>
15th - 16th	DURHAM LUMIERE LIGHT FESTIVAL	<b>£85.00</b>
16th - 20th	TORQUAY TURKEY & TINSEL	<b>£275.00</b>
21st - 22nd	CHRISTMAS AT CHATSWORTH HOUSE	<b>£115.00</b>
21st - 22nd	WINCHESTER & BLENHEIM PALACE	<b>£95.50</b>
28th - 29th	YORK DICKENSAN CHRISTMAS MARKET	<b>£99.50</b>
30th - 4th Dec	FLANDRINO FESTIVE SPARKLE	<b>£249.50</b>

### DECEMBER

2nd - 4th	THURSFORD XMAS SPECTACULAR	<b>£249.50</b>
5th - 6th	BATH CHRISTMAS MARKET & WADDESDON MANOR	<b>£119.50</b>
12th - 13th	GRASSINGTON & SKIPTON MARKETS	<b>£95.50</b>
15th - 18th	BELGIAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS	<b>£255.00</b>
17th - 19th	ALBERT HALL CHRISTMAS CAROLS	<b>£219.50</b>

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26th	BROOKLANDS MOTOR MUSEUM	<b>£36.00</b>	<b>£36.00</b>
27th	WESTONBIRT AUTUMN COLOURS	<b>£31.00</b>	<b>£29.50</b>
28th	LONDON HISTORY & SCIENCE MUSEUMS	<b>£27.00</b>	<b>£26.00</b>
29th	STOWE GARDENS & STOWE HOUSE	<b>£41.00</b>	<b>£39.50</b>
30th	MAN UTD STADIUM TOUR	<b>£41.00</b>	<b>£35.00</b>

### NOVEMBER

5th	CORONATION STREET STUDIO TOUR	<b>£45.00</b>	<b>£44.00</b>
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18th	WADDESDON MANOR & CHRISTMAS FAYRE	<b>£39.50</b>	<b>£38.00</b>
19th	BLENHEIM PALACE GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS	<b>£39.50</b>	<b>£37.50</b>
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23rd	BICESTER VILLAGE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING	<b>£22.00</b>	<b>£21.00</b>
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27th	WORCESTER MARKET & CHRISTMAS LUNCH	<b>£41.00</b>	<b>£39.50</b>
29th	BLENHEIM PALACE & 3 COURSE LUNCH	<b>£41.00</b>	<b>£39.50</b>

### DECEMBER

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# Pothole problems lead to £1m in payouts to motorists

**MORE than £1 million in compensation has been paid out to drivers in Sandwell for damage caused to their cars by potholes in the borough's roads.**

Around 200 claims from motorists have been settled by Sandwell Council during the past four years. Last year council workmen filled in more than 2,000 holes on the borough's ravaged roads.

Despite the compensation bill totalling £1,062,269 across four years, the number of complaints lodged by motorists has fallen since 2011.

## Zone brings new hope for 10,000 jobs

**STALLED** plans for an enterprise zone that would transform Brierley Hill and bring more than 10,000 jobs to the town are back on the table.

The Waterfront and Harts Hill areas will be revamped with Dudley Council and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership working together on the proposals.

The initiative was first mooted in 2011 but shelved in favour of sites at Darlaston and Wolverhampton's i54.

A report released ahead of the council's cabinet meeting this week has revealed a fresh bid is being put together to revamp the town – potentially creating 10,600 jobs.

Deputy leader Councillor Judy Foster said the authority was optimistic about the move.

She said: "We're working very hard to attract investment in Dudley borough and this is very welcome but it's still at the early stages."

It total, there were 23 successful claims made by drivers in 2014/15, compared to 36 in 2013/14, 88 in 2012/13 and 72 in 2011/12. The amount paid out by the council in those years was £563,921, £351,669, £98,462 and £48,217 respectively.

Councillor Maria Crompton, cabinet member for highways and environment, said: "I know the condition of roads is important to all motorists and so a drop in the number of claims for damage to vehicles from potholes has to be good news."

### Encourage

"We have invested in treatment to stop potholes forming in the first place and when they do happen we have done our best to put the matter right first time. I would encourage everybody to report potholes to us. You can do this through the council's website using 'report a problem'."

In 2011/12, the local authority filled in 1,032 potholes, which rose to 2,608 during the last financial year. In December, it was announced Sandwell would receive £7.3m in Government funding to fill potholes and the council pledged a further £902,000 – money to resurface 35 miles of road.

## Rotarians to kick on with funding



Rotarians Paul Jaspal and Alan Bowler, James Morris MP, Halesowen chairman Colin Brookes, deputy mayor and consort, Khanam and Mohammed Hanif, with player, Isaac Cooper, kneeling at front, launch the partnership at Halesowen Town FC

**HALESOWEN** Football Club has helped its local Rotary Club kick off a bid to boost membership and fundraising for charities.

Members of Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club have teamed up with the Yeltz to form a working relationship to spread the word about their work.

Rotarians hope to form working relationships with a host of businesses across the area to engage the club with the community – and Halesowen Town has now become the first corporate member to get on board.

Their links were recognised on Saturday, when representatives from the rotary club, as well as Halesowen and

Rowley Regis MP James Morris, were in attendance at The Grove to present a plaque to the football club.

President of Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club, Alan Bowler, said it was great to have the football club on board and was looking forward to more businesses getting involved. Find out more by calling 0121 550 3679.

## Investigation of finances after deficit

**AN INVESTIGATION** has been launched into the finances of a Black Country healthcare provider.

The Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which provides support for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities across Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton, has recorded a larger than planned deficit.

Finances could get worse over the coming years, Trust bosses have predicted. Health sector regulator Monitor will carry out a report into the financial risks taken by the trust, the challenges it now faces and what can be done to improve the situation.

Marianne Loynes, regional director at Monitor said: "We have launched this investigation to find out more about the financial situation at the trust and to establish what can be done to improve things for those who use its services. No decision has been taken about whether further action is required and an announcement on the outcome of the investigation set to be made in due course."

More than 2,000 staff are employed by the Trust. Chief executive Karen Downman said: "Despite providing excellent care to our community, and having in place good standards of governance and operational performance, our financial sustainability continues to be our biggest challenge."

## Concern at lack of eye tests for children

**THOUSANDS** of disabled children across the West Midlands have never had an eye test, according to new research.

A study by sight loss charity See Ability found 37 percent of pupils attending special schools have no history of eye tests. Visit [www.seeability.org/petition](http://www.seeability.org/petition) to find out more.

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# From song to survival at popular game fair



Thousands attend the popular Midland Game Fair over two days at Weston Park to enjoy country pursuits and rural life

**ONE of the highlights of the year for rural life and country sports enthusiasts returns to Weston Park this weekend.**

The grounds of the stately home, between Cannock and Telford, hosts the Midland Game Fair on Saturday and Sunday.

The event attracts thousands of visitors, ranging from seasoned shots to budding dog handlers and others eager to try out country pursuits.

The daring Devil's Horsemen will join CJ's Birds of Prey and the Shadow Quest Dog Display team among the family favourite events in the fair's main arena.

Again the vast array of stalls will be themed, including Gunmaker's Row, Airgun Expo, Gamekeeper's Row, the Falconry Village, Working Dog Village and the Prince Albert Angling Village.

There will also be a new Fieldsports Arena, offering advice for everything from pigeon plucking to installing night

vision equipment, and a new Survival Camp where ex-SAS soldier Bod Podesta will give lectures.

The Food Festival returns, the stylish side of country living will be highlighted with the clothes retailers and there will be plenty of opportunities to buy for the garden too.

The sporting line-up will include world series clay shooting and gundog finals, the European field target championship, and terrier and lurcher events.

New for this year will be music stages featuring the best in roots and acoustic music, ranging from folk to jazz, with performers including Dan Whitehouse, Goat Roper Rodeo, The Black Feathers, Jacksboro Highway, Hensley Newman Blues, and The Big Easy.

On the day ticket prices will be £20 with under 16s free when accompanied by a paying adult. In advance weekend adult tickets are £34 and day tickets £18. For the latest information see www.midlandgamefair.co.uk website.



Dogs leap into action at the fair

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## Standing ovation for dancer's final bow

**Sylvie Guillem: Life in Progress, Birmingham Hippodrome**

THE last dance was always going to be emotional but even formidable dance superstar Sylvie Guillem was visibly moved by the ten-minute standing ovation she received for her final performance in front of a British audience.

On the second of two nights at the Hippodrome, where the celebrated ballerina has made regular visits during her world tours, she took her final bow.

Even the famously no-nonsense étoile shed a tear as she made her farewell appearance as a performer after her solo performance in Mats Ek's aptly entitled Bye.

In her 50th year and after 39 of those years spent as a dancer — the Parisian former gymnast who was elevated to star dancer by Rudolf Nureyev at the Paris Opera Ballet, then in the late 1980s electrified The Royal Ballet before switching classical ballet for new challenges in modern dance — has decided to leave the stage while still at her best.

Typically, she refused to leave with a 'greatest hits' performance, championing new work and her favourite choreographers.

Guillem's one concession to past glories was the final poignant Bye, which utilised her qualities of grace, strength and passion.

In this signature work she portrayed a dowdy character escaping from an image on screen (with perfect timing)



Charles (Robert Powell) watches William and Kate (Ben Righton and Jennifer Bryden)

## Stubborn Charles is left in a right old royal mess

**Charles III, Birmingham Rep**

IN the week that Queen Elizabeth II became Britain's longest reigning monarch, Mike Bartlett's 'future history play' ponders what could happen when she dies.

The Queen is dead, long live the King, is the cry but the winner of the Olivier Award for best new play of 2015 envisages a brief new age of turmoil.

Avowed monarchists may want to give this one a miss, as the provocative storyline sees a stubborn Charles spark the biggest constitutional crisis since the Civil War by refusing to give royal assent to a new law to curb press freedom. Charles, like his namesake Charles I before him, goes to Westminster in all his finery to dissolve Parliament.

But as riots break out, it results in the Duchess of Cambridge slapping abdication papers in front of her father-in-law. Meanwhile, Princess Diana's ghost makes veiled appearances, separately telling both her ex-husband and eldest son that they will one day be 'the greatest king'.

Directed with customary flash and vig-

## THEATRE REVIEWS

**By Leon Burakowski**

our by Rupert Goold, Bartlett's play is an irreverent fantasy that alludes to Shakespeare plays about rulers facing dilemmas — Richard II, Macbeth and King Lear — and often the characters speak in Shakespearean blank verse which jars somewhat with modern colloquial words, like freakout.

This production, co-directed by Whitney Mosery, benefits from a very strong central performance from stage and screen veteran Robert Powell as the principled new monarch, determined not to be 'just a Spitting Image puppet'. Powell does not impersonate His Royal Highness but suggests just enough of his characteristics to make the character familiar. The rest of the royals are presented more shallowly.

Not a crowning achievement but King Charles III is royally entertaining. It continues at Birmingham Rep until Saturday.



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## New homes boost to local economy

MORE than 500 new jobs have been created as part of a multi-million investment in improving homes in Sandwell.

Officials say the programme, thought to be worth £26.4 million overall, has resulted in a 'significant' boost to borough's economy.

More than 40 apprenticeship places have been created in the ongoing project. The investment is part of a joint commitment made by the council and its project partners Keepmoat, Lovell, Vinci and Wates Living Space.

Work was carried out to make sure that ageing housing stock including tower blocks were fit for purpose.

Meet the Buyer events have been held, resulting in £16.2mn worth of sub-contract work being awarded to local small or medium-sized companies. A training programme has seen 42 apprentices and eight graduate trainees kick-start their careers in construction.



Blues fan and guitarist Pete Boddiss who runs a vinyl and guitar shop in Stourbridge town centre

## Vintage vinyl collected by a blues enthusiast

MUSIC lovers are in vinyl heaven at a room in the Black Country selling vintage records by blues greats and rock 'n' roll pioneers.

It has been launched by musician Pete Boddiss above the Suites Galore studio in Lower High Street, Stourbridge. It is a blues fan's dream with more than 3,000 78rpm discs available, featuring the likes of Big Bill Broonzy, Jimmy Reed and Lightning Hopkins. There are also records by rock 'n' roll legends such as Elvis Presley and Gene Vincent, who were influenced by the blues.

The room is part of his Vintage Shop, which is also packed with acoustic, semi-acoustic and electric guitars. The records feature music dating from the 1930s to the 1960s, part of a collection Mr Boddiss has built up over the past decade with much of the vinyl coming from America and Canada.

Mr Boddiss is preparing for a gig of his own tonight (Thu) when he supports veteran Brum rockers The Steve Gibbons Band at the Robin 2 Club in Bilston. He will be performing blues music on vintage guitars.

Mr Boddiss is an enthusiastic collector and owns unique items including an American acoustic guitar made in 1886 and a 1960s bass that belonged to The Who's John Entwistle.

# Five are sentenced over club violence

**VIOLENCE** broke out between two groups at a busy nightspot, sparking the 'worst disorder ever seen' at the venue, a court was told.

Five people were sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court for their role in the fracas at Stourbridge's River Rooms on January 24. The court heard violence had spilled outside the venue and bar manager Luke Ellis had been injured as he and security staff tried to break it up.

by Lee Watton

disorder had broken out by this time. Mr Soulsby added: "This was the worst disorder the River Rooms has ever seen."

Judge James Burbidge QC said Mills and Louise Cooper, a home care assistant, had been the most 'persistent' during the fracas.

Mills was sentenced to four months imprisonment suspended for 12 months, ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay Mr Ellis compensation of £200.

Louise Cooper was sentenced to two months imprisonment suspended for a year. She was also ordered to carry out 130 hours unpaid work. Her husband was given a community order for 12 months and 50 hours unpaid work.

Hackett was given a four month prison sentence suspended for 12 months and 100 hours unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay Mr Ellis £200 compensation.

Wilkes was given a 12-month community order, unpaid work of 150 hours and ordered to pay £400 compensation to the police officer.

## £8m bid to rescue theatre ruled out

AN ENTERTAINMENT company behind an £8 million bid to takeover Dudley Hippodrome has ruled out buying the venue.

Dudley Council has offered interested parties a final chance to put forward new business cases to take over the venue by the end of this month.

The Rok Group, led by Wolverhampton businessman Jonathan Kendrick, pulled out of talks earlier this year claiming senior councillors had failed to meet them to discuss the proposed deal.

But in the statement, the firm said: "It is with regret that the Rok group have decided they no longer wish to pursue the acquisition, refurbishment and reopening of the Dudley Hippodrome. We wish the friends group and any other interested parties the best of luck in securing this historic venue for the people of Dudley and reiterate that demolishing the building would be a travesty."

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Yet, as Tony Copage explains, he and his brother Mark fell into this new line of domestic work almost by accident. "Mark and I have been paint sprayers for more than 30 years, pretty much since we were kids," said Tony.

"I was technical manager for a major paint spraying firm and Mark was production manager at the same company before we decided to set up on our own.

"The majority of our work is industrial, including car interiors and the marine and oil industries, however four years ago a family member mentioned that she had enquired about new kitchen doors, but had been deterred by the high price.

"I said that we could spray the doors for her, which we did, and she was really impressed with the finished result."

Word about the brothers' excellent value for money makeover soon spread and they quickly began to pick up work throughout the Black Country and West Midlands and as far afield as Shrewsbury and Gloucester.

The kitchen resprays have proved particularly popular with homeowners who are keen to sell their houses at the best price as soon as possible but don't want the expense of new doors or units.

Tony added: "I've also done my own kitchen in light grey but have a wide range of colours to choose from in matt, gloss or satin finish. It usually takes around a week to complete."

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# Heroin is blamed as more are dying from drug abuse

## Cadets will show skills at open day

DUDLEY Army Cadets will host an open day today (Thu) in a bid to attract new recruits.

The organisation is on the lookout for more cadets and adult instructors but anyone is welcome to attend the event at the Army Reserve Centres at Vicar Street between 7pm and 9pm.

Visitors to the open day can have a go at drill, try out mess tin cooking, learn basic camouflage skills and construct a 'basha' for shelter.

Colonel Richard Logan, Commandant, Staffordshire and West Midlands North Sector ACF, said: "Although the Army Cadets is sponsored by the Army it's a youth organisation run by volunteers, men and women from all sorts of backgrounds.

"We aim to help young people to develop independence, confidence and the ability to step up to any challenge. We inspire young people to be good citizens and challenge them to aim high and go further in life, whatever their career plans. We're keen to recruit more cadets and adult instructors but our open day is for everyone so I'd like to encourage local people to come along."

## Exercise sessions prove to be a big hit



Sandwell Leisure Trust team members Becky Clayton, Jasmine Heir, Lisa Fitzgerald and, front, Ekey Shocker

A UNIQUE sports project in Sandwell challenging couch potatoes to do regular exercise sessions has smashed expectations with nearly 800 residents taking part.

Sandwell Leisure Trust's 'Games Project', inspired by last year's Commonwealth Games, encouraged people who were not taking regular exercise to participate in at least one half hour session each week over a six-month period.

Activities ranged from rugby, women's boxing, pilates and netball. The project was funded by Sport England as part of the Make Your Move initiative, which gave funding to various sporting outlets to increase sport activities in the borough.

Rebecca Clayton, SLT sports development and physical activity team manager, said: "It's been one of our most successful stand-alone initiatives to date with unprecedented levels of participation right across the age and capability board. It just goes to show that a lasting legacy is being delivered with record numbers of people getting active."

## Village's beer festival gears up for biggest yet

THE success of a Black Country village's beer festival has led to organisers stepping up the amount of ale available this year.

The third annual Sedgley Real Ale Beer Festival is being held at the Jubilee Scout Hall, off Ladies Walk, on September 25 and 26.

Last year festival goers downed 2,000 pints in 17 hours and organisers have ordered even more beers for this year. Chairman Ian Foster said: "We are very excited with the amount interest in the beer festival. It is really satisfying tasting beers for good causes, and with so many local people turning up, everyone seems certain to meet old friends."

The money raised will benefit 1st Sedgley Scout Group, the BBC's Children in Need appeal and Cystic Fibrosis Trust. The scouts used their share of the proceeds last year to complete work on a log cabin and new toilets at its headquarters.

The landlords of the Horse and Jockey pub at Woodcross, will be on hand to offer expert advice and recommendations.

The festival, featuring lots of musical entertainment, will run from 5pm to 11pm on the Friday and noon to 11pm on the Saturday with more than 30 real ales. The entrance fee of £10 includes drinks tokens and a souvenir glass.

THE number of people dying from drug abuse is rocketing across the West Midlands, new figures show.

From 2009 to 2011 there were 89 deaths in the Black Country, Stafford, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire and Wyre Forest. But this rose to 134 between 2012 and 2014.

Across England and Wales there were 3,346 drug poisoning deaths during that period, the highest since comparable records began in 1993.

Health bosses admit there is a growing problem. Experts say it is easier than ever to buy heroin, which is also purer and therefore more dangerous.

In Dudley, 24 deaths were classed as being related to drugs misuse from 2006 to 2008, and this fell to 19 between 2009 and 2011 before rising again to 33 from 2012 to 2014.

The number rose from 14, to 15 to 25 across the three periods in Walsall, and

### Report by Adam Burling

in Wolverhampton it went from 14 in the first two periods, to 26. Sandwell was the only area where the number actually fell, with 20 drug-related deaths from 2006 to 2008, compared to 17 in 2012 to 2014.

Two people in South Staffordshire died in each of the first two periods, compared to four from 2012 to 2014. Wyre Forest's total went from seven, to five, to eight.

In England there was a 17 per cent rise in the drug misuse mortality rate in 2014, to 39.7 per million population.

And men were more than two and a half times more likely to die from drug misuse than women, with 58 and 21 deaths per million of population for males and females respectively.

Rosanna O'Connor, director of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco at Public Health England said the figures were of 'great concern'.

She added: "The increased global avail-

ability and purity of heroin is clearly having an impact in England.

"Fewer people are using heroin but the harms are increasingly concentrated among older, more vulnerable users and those not recently in touch with their local drug treatment services.

"Reassuringly, overall drug use has also declined and treatment services have helped many people to recover but these figures show the need for an enhanced effort."

Dudley Council health chief Councillor Rachel Harris said: "Any death is a tragedy for the family and friends of the bereaved.

"We have very good integrated treatment services in Dudley that support people to recover from drug misuse and we continue to work across all the services to provide the best possible outcomes for vulnerable people."

The council also insisted the increase in Dudley is 'not significant' and is explained by 'natural variation'.

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## Florence And The Machine



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**Genting Arena, B'ham**  
 'How Big How Blue How Beautiful', Florence's third critically acclaimed album topped the UK album chart upon release, selling more than the rest of the top five combined.  
 Visit [www.gentingarena.co.uk](http://www.gentingarena.co.uk)

## The View



**Friday, 7pm**  
**Slade Rooms, W'ton**  
 Scottish indie outfit The View, who originally hail from Dundee, arrive in Wolverhampton tonight with their latest tour. Here's hoping they have put some clean jeans on. . .  
 Visit [www.wolvescivic.co.uk](http://www.wolvescivic.co.uk)

## Imelda May



**Thursday, 7pm**  
**Wulfrun Hall, W'ton**  
 Last summer Imelda May became a mother for the first time. This summer she turns 40. You might expect her to turn to singing ballads. You would be horribly wrong.  
 Visit [www.wolvescivic.co.uk](http://www.wolvescivic.co.uk)

## Oxjam: Skankin For Nepal



**Sunday, from 3pm**  
**Newhampton Inn, W'ton**  
 Oxjam Wolverhampton Takeover and The Superskas have joined forces for one amazing day of live music, fund-raising and general good vibes at The Newhampton Inn on Sunday.  
 Visit [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)

## POP & ROCK

### UK Foo Fighters: Foo Fighters Tribute

Sat at 7pm - 11pm, £12.50  
 O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

### Florence And The Machine

Sat at 6pm, £35.70  
 Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

### Imelda May

Thu at 7pm, £25  
 Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

### The Bon Jovi Experience: Bon Jovi Tribute

Fri at 7.30pm, £10 - £18.50  
 The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

### The Mike Tramp Band

Wed at 7.30pm, £10 - £12  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

### Stackridge: The Final Bow Tour

Tue at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £15  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

### Professional Wrestling

Sat at 7.30pm, £6  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

### Definitely Might Be: Oasis Tribute

Fri at 6.30pm - 10pm, £11  
 O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

### John Lees

Sun at 7.30pm, £22 - £24.50  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

### The View

Fri at 7pm, £14  
 Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

### John Coghlan's Quo

Fri at 7.30pm, £13 - £15  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

### Tubular Bells For Two

Fri at 8pm - 10.30pm, £17.50 - £19.50  
 Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

### W.A.S.P.

Mon at 7pm, £20  
 Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

### Danko Jones

Tue at 7pm, £12  
 Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

### Crosby, Stills And Nash

Fri at 8pm - 11pm, £46 - £56  
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

### The Wildhearts

Wed at 7pm, £20  
 Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

### OPM

Fri at 8pm - 1am,  
 The Boars Head, Kidderminster, DY10 1EW. Call 01562 861870

### Ugly Kid Joe

Sat at 7pm, £15  
 Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

### Andy Fairweather Low & The Low Riders

Sun at 7.30pm, £20 - £22  
 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ. Call 01527 577330

### Stereo MCs

Fri at 6.30pm - 10pm, £17  
 The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

### The Carpenters Story

Fri at 8pm, £21.45 - £27.90  
 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ. Call 01527 577330

## JAZZ, BLUES & SOUL

### Mark Pringle's Moveable Feast

Fri at 5pm, Free  
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

### Oxjam: Skankin For Nepal

Sun at 3pm - 11pm, £8  
 Newhampton Inn, Wolverhampton, WV6 ODW. Call 01902 340603

## CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

### Worby And Farrell's House Party

Sat at 7.30pm, £17.50  
 Lichfield Garrick, Castle Dyke, Lichfield, West Midlands, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

### CBSO 2015-16 Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto

Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm,  
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

### City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra 2015-16: A-Z Of The CBSO

Sat at 7pm,  
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

## FOLK & ACOUSTIC

### Ben Ottewill

Tue at 7.30pm - 11pm, £12.50  
 Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0844 870 0000

### Allan Taylor

Sat at 7.30pm, £12.50  
 Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. Call 01902 572090

## THEATRE

### Rock And Roll Paradise

Wed at 7.30pm, £18 - £23.90  
 New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

### Nights On Broadway: The Bee Gees Tribute

Thu at 7.30pm, £20 - £22.40  
 New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

### Cheshire Cats

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm, £8 - £13  
 Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

### Darcy Oake: The Edge Of Reality

Tue at 7pm, £21.45 - £27.90  
 Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

### The 39 Steps

Thu at 7.45pm, £9 - £10  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

### Dracula's Ghost

Fri at 7.30pm, £10 - £14  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

### Vincent And Flavia - The Last Tango

Tue at 7.30pm - 10pm, Wed at 2pm - 5pm, 7.30pm - 10pm, Thu at 7.30pm - 10pm, £18.50 - £45  
 Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

### Clod Ensemble: The Red Chair

Fri at 8pm, Sat at 8pm, £13  
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

### Distance

Fri at 7.30pm - 8.45pm, Sat at 7.30pm - 8.45pm, £12  
 mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

### Godspell: Pinpoint Productions

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm, £12 - £14  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

### A Translation Of Shadows

Mon at 8pm, Tue at 8pm, Wed at 8pm, £13  
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

### Welcome To Night Vale

Tue at 7pm, £23.75  
 New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

### Sancho: An Act Of Remembrance

Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 7pm, £20  
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

### Worcester On Stage: HMS Pinafore

Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm,  
 The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE. Call 0121 643 5858

### Rachael Young: I, Myself & Me

Wed at 8pm, Thu at 8pm, £5 - £7  
 mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

### Equus

Sun at 7.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm, £10  
 mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

### King Charles III

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2pm, 7.30pm, £14.50 - £30  
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

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Sat at 7.45pm, Sun at 2.45pm, 7.45pm, Mon at 7.45pm, Tue at 7.45pm, Wed at 7.45pm, Thu at 7.45pm, £10 - £11  
 The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE. Call 0121 643 5858

### That'll Be The Day

Wed at 7.30pm, £23.50  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

## COMEDY

### Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious

Fri at 8pm, Sat at 8pm, £35 - £50  
 Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

### Comedy Night

Thu at 7pm, £9.90  
 Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

### Alex Horne: Monsieur Butterfly

Fri at 8pm, £15  
 mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

### Ship Of Fools Comedy

Fri at 7.45pm, £7  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

### The Best In Live Stand-Up Comedy

Fri at 7pm, Sat at 7pm, £5 - £18.25  
 The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD. Call 0871 472 0400

### Comedy In The Met

Sat at 8pm, £10  
 Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

### Sean Hughes: Mumbo Jumbo

Thu at 8pm, £13.50 - £15.50  
 Artrix, Slideslow Drive, Artrix, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 1PQ. Call 01527 577330

## TALKS

### Keith Barry: Brain Hacker

Sat at 8pm, £21.40  
 New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

### An Evening With Nick Owen: Talk

Thu at 7.30pm, £15  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

### Peter & Dan Snow: The Battle of Waterloo Experience

Mon at 7.30pm - 10pm, £15 - £17.50  
 Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

## ART GALLERIES

### Wendy Ramshaw's Room Of Dreams

Fri - Thu at 10.30am - 5pm, Free  
 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH. Call 0121 303 1966

### Parisian Cafe

Tue at 11am - 1pm, Wed at 11am - 1pm,  
 Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, WS10 7DF. Call 0121 556 0683

## FOOD & DRINK

### Caribbean Sunday Lunch

Sun at 1pm - 3pm, £15  
 Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 248 0708

### Midlands Whisky Festival

Fri at 6pm - 9.30pm, Sat at 10.45am - 5.30pm, £30 - £150  
 Stourbridge Town Hall, DY8 1YE. Call 01384 812960

## OTHER EVENTS

### EGX 2015

Thu at 11am - 6pm, £17.50  
 The NEC Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

### Ironbridge World Heritage Festival

Sat at 12 noon - 5pm  
 Wharfage, Ironbridge, TF8 7NH. Call 01952 433 424

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star



# 'I simply love to make people laugh'

**AFTER a three-year absence when he was off making hit TV shows, Michael McIntyre is now returning to what he does best: stand-up comedy.**

This autumn, he is embarking on a major nationwide arena tour with his new show entitled Happy & Glorious. Travelling the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland, the tour confirms Michael's position as the most popular comedian on these islands. He'll line-up at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena tomorrow and Saturday, then again on September 25 and 26.

His previous tour, Showtime, was the biggest-seller in the world in 2012, playing to over 640,000 people. That included a record-equalling ten-night residency at London's O2 Arena, matching the figure set by pop superstar Rihanna the previous year. This tour may prove even more successful.

Michael has also thrived in the DVD market. He has so far released three best-selling DVDs. 2008's Live and Laughing was the biggest selling UK debut stand-up DVD of its time; Hello Wembley, which in 2009 became the fastest-selling UK stand-up DVD of all time, a record it still holds; and 2012's Showtime, which beat its competitors to the Christmas Number One spot.

He has been making a name for himself on the international stage, too. In 2013 he performed to sold-out arenas in South Africa, Dubai, Norway, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. Michael's performance to an audience of 9,000 in Johannesburg was the largest ever comedy show in Africa, and his run in Dubai won him



London comedian Michael McIntyre can pull bigger crowds than most pop stars

the Time Out Best Night Out award.

It's no surprise that his live show is such a hit all over the world. Michael dazzles audiences with fantastically funny material drawn from his life as a husband and father-of-two.

The comedian, who has won enough awards to endanger the stability of

his mantelpiece, adds: "I can't wait to be playing once again to a big room that is really enjoying the show. I'm looking forward to thinking, 'If you're loving that, wait till you hear this!' I'm bringing everything to this show – voices, physical comedy, the works. I simply love making people laugh."

## Dance duo's Last Tango

KEEP dancing but only together for a little while longer... ex-Strictly Come Dancing professionals Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace-Mistry bring The Last Tango, their farewell show, to Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday to Saturday, September 22 to 26.

The Italian dance duo who met in England, famed for their poise and passionate performances, have been dancing together for 20 years.

During that period they were World Dance title holders, starred in their own West End shows and tours – including Midnight Tango and Dance 'Til Dawn – and most famously participated as professionals in several series of Strictly. Flavia won the celebrated Glitterball trophy in 2012 partnering Olympic gymnast Louis Smith.

"We have had such a fantastic time," said Flavia, who is married to her former Strictly partner Jimi Mistry, the Coronation Street actor who graduated from drama school in Birmingham.

"It's an incredible experience to perform live in front of our wonderful audience night after night, but all good things must come to an end."

Vincent, who this summer married long-term girlfriend Susan Duddy, added: "The last few years have been amazing. It may be our final theatre tour but we're going to go out with a bang."

Native Monster online writer Steven Ecott took a dance workshop with Vincent and Flavia – watch the video and see how he got on, plus find out more about the show, at native monster.com

### Sancho celebrated by a leading actor

PATTERSON Joseph brings his elegant one-man show Sancho - An Act of Remembrance to Birmingham Rep's Studio venue for four nights from Tuesday. RSC and National Theatre actor Patterson also wrote this celebration of Charles Ignatius Sancho. Born on a slave ship in the 18th century, Sancho became an author and composer, and was painted by Gainsborough.

King Charles III is in the main house until Saturday. Sarah Cameron performs dark Scottish fantasy The Red Chair at The Door for three nights from tonight (Thu). Stan's Cafe give movies a surreal Japanese twist in A Translation of Shadows at The Door Monday-Wednesday.

### Weird hit podcast brought to stage

A QUIRKY US podcast that has won a cult following among sci-fi fans and connoisseurs of weirdness is making the transition to the stage in Birmingham as part of a UK tour.

Welcome to Night Vale is a spoof radio broadcast from a strange desert town, a kind of Lake Wobegon meets Twin Peaks where aliens are likely to be among your neighbours.

Written by Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor, the stage version will feature material not used in the podcast and will feature the soothing tones of the host Cecil Palmer, played by Cecil Baldwin. It's at the New Alexandra Theatre on Tuesday.

### Classic rock is in the spotlight

THERE is an impressive array of gigs for fans of 1960s and 70s rock over the next few days.

It starts tomorrow night (Fri) with an evening with Crosby, Stills & Nash. David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash have each been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice – with Crosby, Stills & Nash, and with The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and The Hollies, respectively.

Meanwhile, the Robin 2 in Bilston has drummer John Coghlan's Quo performing vintage Status Quo tomorrow, John Lees' Barclay James Harvest on Sunday and Stackridge on their Final Bow tour on Tuesday.

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The Walker Art Gallery collection is in an impressive Victorian building



Mathew Street Pic: VisitEngland /Mark McNulty



Albert Dock houses a range of restaurants, shops, bars, museums and galleries

# Let it be Liverpool, vibrant home of The Beatles and a whole lot more

**THE Cavern was rammed, the mop-tops were rocking I Want To Hold Your Hand, it was only the Spanish accent between songs that made the illusion fade.**

Welcome to International Beatles Week. I was sharing a famous brick cellar on Merseyside with a united nations of Fab Four aficionados enjoying Barcelona's tribute to The Beatles, The Flaming Shakers, having just squeezed past Japan's answer to the famous four posing for photos in Mathew Street.

You could be forgiven for thinking that every week is International Beatles Week in Liverpool, where the most famous pop group ever still play a vital role in the tourist industry. But organisers of the special week which takes over several venues in the city, including the three stages based on the

by Leon Burakowski

network of cellars that birthed the Beatles, is a massive draw.

It was pure coincidence that I happened to be visiting during the Fab Four feast but the festival is obviously popular with the die-hard devotees. Most of Scandinavia's Beatles fans seemed to be staying at the same hotel as me.

Mathew Street, at the epicentre of Liverpool's Cavern Quarter near shopping destination Liverpool One, is one big photo opp with its bricks engraved with the name of every band that played the legendary venue, from Billy J Kramer to Oasis. Meanwhile, John Lennon's statue nonchalantly leans on the wall and seems to watch the crowds with mild amusement.

The street has several pubs once frequented by 'Four Lads Who Shook The

World' plus an array of shops and venues selling Beatles memorabilia.

But there is more to Liverpool than The Beatles. The city was long Britain's most important port and remains a cosmopolitan and culturally vibrant hub.

## Waterfront

It's monumental waterfront buildings confirm the city as Britain's equivalent to New York. At Albert Dock the red pillared warehouses have been converted into bars, restaurants, galleries and shops. It also has Merseyside Maritime Museum, revealing its sea-going history and its infamous role in the slave trade at its third floor International Slavery Museum.

Liverpool's cultural offering is substantial with Tate Liverpool at Albert Dock and the Walker Art Gallery on William Brown Street. The Walker has a superb collection

of 500 pieces including work by Rembrandt, Rubens, to Lowry and Hockney.

The fascinating World Museum nearby is currently the only British venue for Mayas: Revelation of an Endless Time, an enthralling exhibition on loan from Mexico (until October 18). All are free, though the Tate charges for special exhibitions.

With St George's Hall opposite, the Walker forms part of the most impressive array of Victorian civic architecture in Britain. The three main city theatres, The Playhouse, The Royal Court and Empire are all nearby, just a few yards from Lime Street rail station.

With its art and architecture, but most of all its irreverent quirkiness — such as the multi-coloured Dazzle Ferry painted by Sgt Pepper artist Sir Peter Blake and the zip-wire over busy Church Street — Liverpool is a city that never fails to impress.



The lobby at Hampton by Hilton Liverpool City Centre

I stayed at the Hampton by Hilton Liverpool City Centre Hotel, a few minutes walk from Albert Dock and the city centre. It is located on the edge of the up-and-coming Baltic Quarter next to the city's only brew pub The Baltic Exchange.

Every guest at Hampton by Hilton receives a bundle of amenities, including complimentary hot breakfast, free wireless internet and access to the fitness centre. Each contemporary guest room has a queen-sized bed and many offer a deluxe sofa bed, ideal for families. Parking (charged) is available.

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Jenna Coleman

**Doctor Who (BBC1, 7.40pm)**  
Peter Capaldi is back as the eponymous time traveller, and there promises to be no shortage of slick adventures for the Gallifreyan and his long suffering assistant, Clara (Jenna Coleman). In the first offering it seems the Time Lord has gone missing, which is bad news for Earth dwellers, as a strange extra terrestrial force has frozen the skies. Clara is desperate to find her friend, but where is he and what is he hiding from? Could an arch enemy with a black hat and Scottish accent be responsible? The fine supporting cast includes Michelle Gomez, Jenna Redgrave, Kelly Hunter, and Clare Higgins. Game of Thrones fans should also look out for Maisie Williams in an upcoming adventure.

BBC1

**6.00 Breakfast.** **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Live Davis Cup Tennis. Great Britain v Australia. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Formula 1: Singapore Grand Prix - Qualifying Highlights. **6.35** BBC News. **6.45** Regional Programme. **6.50** **Pointless Celebrities.** Alexander Armstrong quizzes another line-up of famous faces on the general knowledge game show. The teams are singer-turned-author Louise Wener and wildlife presenter Kate Humble, veteran Olympian Mary Peters and ice dance star Jayne Torvill, comedian Tony Hawks and broadcaster Henry Kelly and comedy duo Hale and Pace. Who'll be best when it comes to picking the most obscure correct responses? **7.40** **Doctor Who.** New series. Peter Capaldi returns as the Doctor for another series of time-travelling exploits. However, as this first adventure begins, it seems the Time Lord has gone missing - which is bad news for Earth, as a mysterious alien force has frozen the skies. Clara needs to find her friend - but where is he and what is he hiding from? Things soon become clear with the appearance of a familiar old enemy with a black hat and Scottish accent. **8.30** **The National Lottery: In It to Win It.** Dale Winton hosts the quiz show in which five contestants answer questions to scoop a big cash prize. Includes the National Lottery draws with a performance by Jack Savoretti. **9.20** **Casualty.** On her first day, new junior doctor Alicia treats a vulnerable pregnant woman and realises her relationship is not what it seems. Meanwhile, Dylan makes an effort with Lofly. **10.10** BBC News; Weather. **10.30** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Chelsea v Arsenal and Manchester City v West Ham United; National Lottery Update. **11.55** **Film: Rogue.** (2007) Thriller, starring Radha Mitchell and Michael Vartan. **1.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

**6.10** **Film:** Anne of Green Gables. (1934) **7.25** **Film:** Sharpy's Fabulous Adventure. (2011) **8.55** **Film:** The Last Flight of Noah's Ark. (1980) **10.30** **Animal Park.** (R) **11.00** More Creatures Great and Small. (R) **11.30** More Creatures Great and Small. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** **Film:** That's Entertainment Part Two. (1976) **3.00** **Triathlon.** **4.30** **Frog It!** Trade Secrets. (R) **5.00** **World's Busiest Railway** 2015. (R) **6.00** **The Harry Bikers' Northern Exposure.** As the travellers head for Russia, they swap vehicles for Dave's old motorbike and sidecar before spending a night at the ballet, and also taste some of the country's finest foods. (R) **7.00** **Gardeners' World.** Joe Swift visits a tropical paradise in Runcom and Monty Don works on Longmeadow as autumn unfolds in the garden. (R) **7.30** **Galapagos - Islands of Change: Natural World.** David Attenborough narrates a documentary that looks at the impact increased migration and tourism has had on the Pacific archipelago's wildlife. (R) **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Captain Mainwaring organises a dance in an attempt to boost platoon morale, but Pike interrupts proceedings to make an important announcement regarding his girlfriend Violet. (R) **9.00** **6 Degrees of Separation.** Panel game show, presented by Professor Brian Cox, with Ben Miller and Hugh Dennis leading two teams competing to find the scientific connections between six unlikely objects. (R) **9.30** **Mock the Week.** Ed Byrne, Sara Pascoe, Ed Gamble and Nathan Catton join Dara O Briain, Hugh Dennis and Andy Parsons for the topical comedy show. (R) **10.00** **Cradle to Grave.** The world is changing for Spud as the docks face closure. (R) **10.30** **Boy Meets Girl.** A visit to an art gallery prompts Leo to ask Judy a very important question. (R) **11.00** **The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice.** Including an interview with the week's eliminated baker. (R) **11.30** **Live Triathlon.** **1.50** **Film:** The Hunter. (2010) **3.15** This is BBC Two. **5.55** The Instant Gardener. (R)

ITV

**6.00** **CITV:** The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Adventure Time. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Fish Hooks. **8.45** Horrid Henry. **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** **ITV News.** **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.30** The X Factor. (R) **11.30** Rugby World Cup. Tonga v Georgia (Kick-off 12.00pm). **1.55** Rugby World Cup. Ireland v Canada (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Rugby World Cup. South Africa v Japan (Kick-off 4.45pm). **6.45** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.55** **ITV News;** Weather. **7.00** **Keep It in the Family.** Bradley Walsh hosts the game show in which families from Leeds and Manchester go head to head in a series of fun-filled rounds. Heidi Range, Kimberly Wyatt, Brian McFadden, Rebecca Ferguson, Michelle Heaton and Louis Walsh are the celebrities holding clues to the prizes on offer, and there are performances from Britain's Got Talent stars Jack Pack and living cartoon artist Ennio Marchetto. Last in the series. **8.00** **The X Factor.** Caroline Flack and Olly Murs present coverage as the audition stage concludes, with another batch of applicants performing in front of judges Simon Cowell, Cheryl Fernandez-Versini, Nick Grimshaw and Rita Ora, as well as an arena audience of thousands, in the hope of winning one of the coveted places at Boot Camp. Continues on ITV tomorrow at 7pm. **9.30** **Through the Keyhole.** Keith Lemon hosts a revival of the classic game show originally presented by David Frost. Visiting three mystery celebrity homes each week, he challenges an all-star panel to guess the identities of the famous occupants. This week's guests are Bruno Tonioli, Davina McCall and Dave Berry. **10.30** **ITV News;** Weather. **10.45** **Film: Invictus.** (2009) Premiere. Newly elected President Mandela seeks to use the 1995 Rugby World Cup to unite a divided South Africa. Clint Eastwood's factual drama, with Morgan Freeman and Matt Damon. **1.20** Jackpot247. **3.00** Show Me the Telly. (R) **3.50** **ITV Nightscreen.** Text-based information service.

CHANNEL 4

**6.10** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.35** Great Scottish Swim 2015. **7.30** Para Tri. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **11.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **11.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ayr and Newbury. **4.10** Channel 4 News. **4.30** Couples Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.20** Couples Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.05** **Location, Location, Location.** Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer help two sets of first-time buyers search for properties in Bristol and the nearby countryside of the Cotswolds. (R) **7.00** **Grand Designs.** Boat enthusiast James Strangeways invites Kevin McCloud to survey progress on the construction of his new home, which his architect nephew Ben Hobbethwaite has designed to be as "un-houselike" as possible. James has spent the past 35 years travelling the canals and waterways of Britain, and despite never liking houses, has decided now is the time to put down roots on dry land. Ben hoped a home standing on stilts above a marsh, and incorporating ship-like qualities such as a keel-shaped roof, will be enough to satisfy his boat-mad uncle. However, Ben's contractor goes into liquidation a few months into the project, taking £87,000 of the £300,000 budget, and when James decides to make a few tweaks to the design, alarm-bells begin to ring for the young architect. (R) **8.00** **Secrets of the Terracotta Warriors - Secret History.** Recent discoveries about China's Terracotta Army, an extraordinary collection of ceramic sculptures unearthed in 1974 and dating back more than 2,000 years. (R) **9.00** **It Was Alright in the 1960s.** Matt Lucas narrates another look back at TV shows from past decades, revisiting the changing social attitudes reflected on the small screen in the 1960s. **10.00** **Gogglebox.** (R) **11.05** **Film: Battle: Los Angeles.** (2011) Sci-fi thriller, starring Aaron Eckhart and Ramon Rodriguez. **1.20** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.15** Holyoaks. (R) **4.25** **Location, Location, Location.** (R) **5.20** Fifteen to One. (R)

CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake! **9.55** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.30** Cowboy Builders. (R) **11.25** Cowboy Builders. (R) **12.25** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.20** **Film:** Columbo Goes to College. (1991) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **3.15** **Film:** Asteroid: Final Impact. (2015) Premiere. Disaster thriller, starring Mark Lutz. **5.00** The Nightmarer Neighbour Next Door. (R) **6.00** **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Enforcement officers are faced with the difficult job of evicting a woman with two children - a task that takes a turn for the worse when her ex-partner makes an appearance. In Liverpool, locals threaten a riot over an unpaid debt at a computer shop, while two agents come across an extremely rare car in the course of their duties. (R) **6.55** **Film: Left Behind.** (2014) Premiere. The world is plunged into chaos when millions of people suddenly disappear. An airline pilot tries to save the remaining passengers on his flight, while on the ground, his daughter tries to find out if her mother and brother are among those who have vanished. Fantasy adventure based on the series of novels by Jerry B Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, starring Nicolas Cage and Lea Thompson. **8.55** **5 News Weekend.** **9.00** **Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present action from the Football League, including Wolverhampton Wanderers v Brighton & Hove Albion, Nottingham Forest v Middlesbrough and Rotherham United v Cardiff City in the Championship, Swindon Town v Burton Albion in League One, and Oxford United v Portsmouth in League Two. **10.30** **Celebrity Big Brother: The End is Nigh.** The ups and downs of life in the BB house as friendships and alliances are made, battle lines are drawn and arguments erupt. **11.30** **Film: Date Movie.** (2006) An unloved and overweight woman contends with a jealous rival and disapproving parents to get the man of her dreams. Spoof romantic comedy, with Alyson Hannigan and Adam Campbell. **12.55** SuperCasino. **3.10** **Celebrity Big Brother: The End is Nigh.** (R) **4.00** Transporter: The Series. **4.50** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

**BBC Three**  
**7.00** Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear: The Best of Series 22 **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News **9.30** **Film:** Never Back Down (2008) **11.15** Family Guy **1.30** Top Coppers **2.00** Fied 2 **3.30** Russell Howard's Good News **3.00** Don't Tell the Bride **4.00** Close  
**BBC Four**  
**7.00** India's Frontier Railways **8.00** Timeshift: The Golden Age of the Tram - A Streetcar Named Desire **9.00** Beck: Room 302 **10.30** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **11.30** Sing's Motown **12.30** Northern Soul: Living for the Weekend **1.30** Love Me Do: The Beatles '62 **2.30** TOTP2 **3.45** Close  
**ITV2**  
**11.35** You've Been Framed!: Animals **12.35** The X Factor **1.40** The Xtra Factor **2.40** Catchphrase **3.25** **Film:** Sweet November (2001) **5.40** **Film:** The Shaggy Dog (2006) **7.40** **Film:** Bean (1997) **9.30** The Xtra Factor **10.30** **Celebrity Juice** **11.15** Safeworld **12.50** **Fake Reaction** **1.25** Crazy Beaches **2.10** **Totally Bonkers** Guinness World Records **2.35** Pixie Lott: The Hot Desk **2.45** Teleshopping  
**ITV3**  
**1.50** Lewis **10.00** The Road to Coronation Street **11.40** Wire in the Blood **1.10** On the Buses **2.05** **ITV3** Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping  
**ITV4**  
**12.55** The Car Chasers **1.50** **Film:** Smokey and the Bandit (1977) **3.45** **Film:** Smokey and the Bandit II (1980) **5.50** Storage Wars **7.15** Rugby World Cup: France v Italy (Kick-off 8.00pm). **10.15** Storage Wars **10.45** Hat-Trick Heroes **11.00** Rugby World Cup Highlights **12.15** **Film:** Driven (2001) **2.35** Nitro Circus **2.55** **ITV4** Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping  
**E4**  
**11.00** How I Met Your Mother **12.00** Made in Chelsea LA **1.00** **Film:** Hop (2011) **3.00** Melissa & Joey **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** **Film:** Edward Scissorhands (1990) **8.30** The Big Bang Theory: Top 5 Army **11.00** The Inbetweeners **12.00** The IT Crowd **1.05** Rude Tube **2.10** Bad Robots **2.35** The Inbetweeners **3.25** The IT Crowd **4.20** How I Met Your Mother  
**Film4**  
**11.00** The Frogmen (1951) **1.00** Fletch (1985) **3.00** A Monster in Paris (2011) **4.45** The Princess Diaries (2001) **7.10** Just Married (2003) **9.00** Unstoppable (2010) **12.50** The Woman in Black (2012) **12.50** The Inkeepers (2011) **2.55** The Cicrones **3.15** Close

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FILM CHOICES

**MONDAY**  
**Final Verdict, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
A lawyer's career is advanced when she successfully prosecutes a man for the murder of his wife. Years later, she discovers that the man she put away may have been innocent after all – and that he now wants revenge on her for his imprisonment. Thriller, starring Erica Durance and Sebastian Roberts. (2009)

**TUESDAY**  
**In the Dark, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
A woman is blinded following an accident in which her husband and child are killed. She employs a nurse, only to discover he has developed a dangerous obsession with her. Thriller, starring Elisabeth Rohm, Sam Page and Shannon Elizabeth. (2013)

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Another Man's Wife, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
A family takes a holiday in a remote mountain cabin to recover from a tragic accident. During the break, the members are befriended by a seemingly kind man, unaware that he is harbouring a grudge against them and has a twisted plan to ruin their lives. Thriller, starring Rena Sofer and Dylan Neal. (2011)



The Box, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm

**THURSDAY**  
**Committed, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
A psychologist recovering from the death of her fiancée takes a job working at her mentor's unconventional mental institution. Soon after arriving, she discovers she is officially a patient, not a staff member – and a series of strange events makes her fear she is actually going mad. Thriller, starring Andrea Roth and Richard Burgi. (2011)

**FRIDAY**  
**The Box, BBC1, 11.55pm**  
A couple are given a mysterious wooden box with a button on it and told that if they press it, they will be given a million dollars but that someone somewhere in the world will die. After pressing the button, they fear they may be the next victim when the box is passed on, and try to find out how and why this is happening. Sci-fi thriller, with Cameron Diaz and James Marsden. (2009)

Gareth is stripping away the backing

Singing a cappella is the ultimate test of any choir according to Gareth Malone.

"Only once you've stripped away all those musical crutches that a backing track offers – it's possible to truly see, and test, the group's quality."

Originally used in religious circles, a cappella (Italian for "in the manner of the chapel") is music performed by a group or solo singer without any instrumental accompaniment.

It has become increasingly popular in recent years, with talent shows such as The X Factor challenging singers to perform a cappella to get a true indication of the power and range of their voices before making a decision on their futures.

The style has also gained popularity thanks to the 2012 film Pitch Perfect in which all-girl singing group The Bellas take on their male rivals in a campus competition.

Malone, the man behind BBC2's The Choir – which won two TV Baftas – and Gareth's All Star Choir which saw a group of celebrity singers score a No.1 last year in aid of Children in Need, is using the a cappella as the inspiration for his latest series, as he embarks on a search for the nation's most entertaining amateur group.

But although Malone has made it clear that musicianship and technical ability are important, he will also be looking for funny and astonishing performances, including some choreography and gymnastics, that could turn groups into viral stars.

Therefore The Naked Choir is expected to cover a wide variety of genres, with choirs and singing groups from gospel, barbershop, hip hop, doo wop and more all encouraged to enter at the audition stage earlier this year.

The entrants have now been whittled down to eight groups to compete in the six-part series, which will focus on their preparations for performances at famous public venues in front of big audiences.

A jury of carefully selected music experts have the final say and will decide which choirs stay in the competition and which go home.

The Naked Choir is the first commission for Malone since controller Kim Shillinglaw took charge of BBC2 in April last year.

"Gareth's energy and enthusiasm are infectious," she said.

Twenty Twenty's Tim Carter has executive produced the series, and is also clearly excited to be working with Malone.

"We've seen Gareth create choirs from scratch," he adds.

"Now he's going to lift the lid on a remarkably vibrant and creative British amateur singing scene."

"The stripped-back performances will feature no backing tracks or musical instruments in a bid to pose the ultimate test of vocal dexterity, creativity and ingenuity."

Tonight, a London community choir, an Essex gospel group, a sextet of Southampton students and female barbershoppers from Portsmouth attempt to harmonise their way into the competition's next stage.

Will they hit the right note with Gareth and judges? Or will their performance tonight be their swan song?



The Naked Choir with Gareth Malone, Tuesday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

**MONDAY**  
**The Gadget Show, Channel 5, 7pm**  
If you have an insatiable love of gizmos, then the good news is Jason Bradbury, Amy Williams and the team are back with a new run of this ever engaging strand. As always they will be reviewing the latest technological devices on the market, including a behind-the-scenes look at gaming channel The Diamond Mindcart.

**Doc Martin, ITV, 9pm**  
Fans of this ever engaging saga had a long wait between series, but it was worth it as Martin Clunes's eponymous medic is the best way to lift the spirits after the horrors of Monday. Yes, there's more of the usual picture postcard seaside shots, all the old favourites, and a few new ones to keep the doc on his toes, but that format never outstays its welcome. This week, Ellingham moves out of the Surgery to give Louisa space, which leaves a doting Mrs Tishell worried that he won't be able to take care of himself. Elsewhere, the ever useless PC Penhale helps Janice babysit, and Al finds out about Bert's behaviour. There are bailiffs at the restaurant, and it doesn't look like they're after fish and chips.

**TUESDAY**  
**Deals, Wheels and Steals, ITV, 7.30pm**  
If you're a fan of Top Gear and Bargain Hunt, then imagine a cross between the two and you get the idea behind this new series. The format is simple: car dealers compete against each other to bag the best bargain motor and sell it for a profit. Of course it's going to take a lot of ingenuity for the participants to stay one step ahead of their rivals, as this opening episode proves. New dealer Jim goes up against more experienced traders to prove he's got what it takes to cut it in this dog eat dog world. May the best man, or woman, win.

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Midwinter of the Spirit, ITV, 9pm**  
This new supernatural drama is sure to raise goosebumps, as it follows the work of Merrily Watkins, one of the few women priests working as an exorcist. After losing her adulterous husband Sean in a car crash, Merrily seeks refuge in her job, but it provides little comfort when her 16-year-old daughter rejects her religious beliefs and is led into the path of danger. To complicate matters further, the

local police ask for Merrily's advice in the investigation of a grisly murder, and it's not long before she's risking life and limb to get to the bottom of the mystery as she starts to wonder whether satanists could be operating in the city. The stellar cast includes Anna Maxwell Martin and David Threlfall.

**THURSDAY**  
**Who Do You Think You Are?, BBC1, 9pm**  
BBC news correspondent Frank Gardner sets out to find out whether there is any truth in his late mother's claim that her side of the family first arrived in Britain with the Normans. During his search for answers, he manages to trace his ancestry all the way back to his 10-time great-grandfather Sir Michael Stanhope - a knight of the Tudor court, who was accused of treason. But the journey does not end there, as he gets much closer to his mother's suspicions than he could ever have imagined.



Midwinter of the Spirit, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

**FRIDAY**  
**Strictly Come Dancing, BBC1, 9pm**  
Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the first of this weekend's two live shows, which sees six of the 15 famous faces join forces with their professional partners to battle it out on the dance floor and convince judges Len Goodman, Craig Revel Horwood, Bruno Tonioli and Darcey Bussell that they can trip the light fantastic with style and grace. This year's participants are Jeremy Vine, Katie Derham, Ainsley Harriott, Kellie Bright, Georgia May Foote, Carol Kirkwood, Peter Andre, Daniel O'Donnell, Anthony Ogogo, Jay McGuinness, Anita Rani, Jamelia, Helen George, Iwan Thomas and Kirsty Gallacher. But who will follow in the fleet-footed steps of 2014 winner Caroline Flack?

**Piers Morgan's Life Stories, ITV, 9pm**  
Punk icon John Lydon, perhaps still best known as Johnny Rotten of Sex Pistols fame - talks to Piers about his life and career. The musician looks back on his controversial rise to fame and notoriety in the band that sent shockwaves through the music industry during the late 1970s, and made headline news with anti-establishment hits such as Anarchy in the UK and God Save the Queen.

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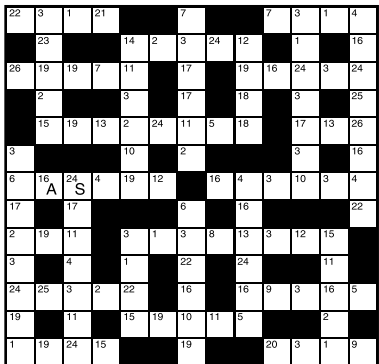
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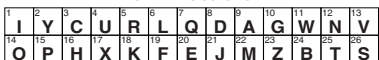
# BRAIN GYM No.343

## Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

## Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

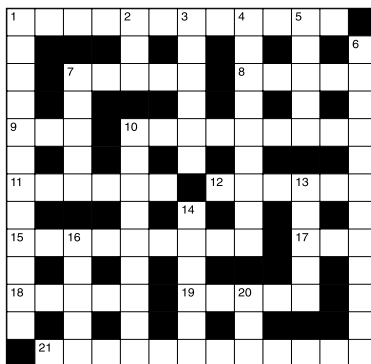
### Cryptic Clues:

#### Across

- Holding the trousers for two couples? (4,2,6)
- The round to end all rounds (5)
- Subtract 5 from 18 and add 500 as a corollary (5)
- Gained 2 (3)
- Intimate relationship leads to niggardiness? (9)
- Ripped or backed bull-fighter (6)
- Property in Eastern country (6)
- Prevent the whole lot being planted with trees (9)
- When to back 9? (5)
- Flower gets nothing for 16's one (5)
- Decoration obtained - could have been lamed (5)
- Evidence that an increase hurts? (7,5)

#### Down

- Act dangerously to produce spindled drama (4,4,4)
- Have 17 (3)
- Underneath about 50 make animal noises (6)
- Flying ship? (3-6)
- Furnish with some forgotten duets (5)
- Misunderstanding's got over cables (7,5)
- A punishing fellow, perhaps, to be more exact (5)
- One on the bottle is a twister! (9)
- Cancel and expunge article from year-book (5)
- Bacon would be back in the game (6)
- Letter finished for pirate (5)
- Those who take it can't expect to keep dry (3)



### Quick Clues:

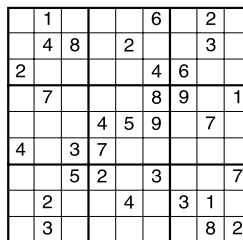
#### Across

- Serious lack of care (5,7)
- Fissure (5)
- Topic (5)
- Look at (3)
- Power-maker (9)
- Transfix (6)
- England (6)
- Learnedly (9)
- Hill (3)
- Porcelain (5)
- Bread-maker (5)
- There (2,10)

#### Down

- Testify (4,8)
- Observe (3)
- Prolong (6)
- From the side (9)
- Swindle (5)
- Back door (4,8)
- Inexpensive (5)
- Gad about (9)
- Bury (5)
- Weak (6)
- Fusion (5)
- Little goat (3)

## Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	9	5	4	3	7	8	2	6
4	2	8	1	9	6	3	7	5
6	3	7	8	2	5	9	1	4
7	8	4	2	6	1	5	3	9
3	5	9	7	8	4	2	6	1
2	1	6	9	5	3	4	8	7
5	4	2	8	7	6	1	9	3
9	7	1	3	4	2	6	5	8
8	6	3	5	1	9	7	4	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 4 Footman; 8 Orally; 9 Startle; 10 Tissue; 11 Inform; 12 Good hand; 18 Hompipe; 20 Defeat; 21 Grasps; 22 Parties; 23 Honour; 24 Selfish. Down: 1 Postage; 2 Passion; 3 Slough; 5 Outsider; 6 Tariff; 7 Allure; 13 Ash-trees; 14 Mission; 15 Measure; 16 Deface; 17 Seat of; 19 Narrow. QUICK - Across: 4 Absolve; 8 Reason; 9 Flowery; 10 Jostle; 11 Target; 12 Constant; 18 Preserve; 20 Finish; 21 Frigid; 22 Pretent; 23 Cannon; 24 General. Down: 1 Project; 2 Passing; 3 Goblet; 5 Belittle; 6 Onward; 7 Vortex; 13 Asphyxia; 14 Progeny; 15 Wedding; 16 Fierce; 17 Little; 19 Streak.

## Thinking space

## Quiz

- Who founded the first US detective agency in 1850?
- What plant is also called 'shepherd's weatherglass'?
- Who ruled England for nine days in 1553?
- Which poet wrote Sonnets from the Portuguese?
- Which metal is symbolised by the letters Co?
- What was the original surname of film producer Sam Goldwyn?
- What was the most famous TV role of actor Jay Silverheels?
- Which jazz player wrote the song Mood Indigo?
- What is the name of the professor in the game 'Cluedo'?
- Which fruit has varieties such as Merton Glory and Napoleon Bigarreau?

### Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Butterfly; 2 Jamaica; 3 Berkshire; 4

Schwarzwald; 5 Yellow River;

6 The Red Cross; 7 1859; 8 Irving Berlin;

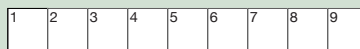
9 Richmal Crompton; 10 Purple Heart.

Niner: INTERPLAY

## Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

569 gives a boy,  
6427 gives a relative,  
9827137 gives a professional.



# star★extra TRAVEL London Theatre Breaks

**Choose your show, price band\* and how you want to travel**

## Rail inclusive breaks – Two or three days

Departures most weekends

### Saturday Night Theatre from £159.<sup>95</sup>

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing.

### Theatre Showstopper from £229.<sup>95</sup>

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening.

Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel of your choice (hotel supplements may apply). Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

## Coach inclusive breaks – Two days

Selected weekend departures

### Saturday Night from £139.<sup>95</sup>

### Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £149.<sup>95</sup>

Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing.

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the show to see an evening performance.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel plus full English breakfast.

Pick-up points offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

\*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single rooms subject to availability – supplements apply.

Organised by Omega Events Ltd (ABTA Y590X)



For a theatre brochure please call the promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go to [expressandstar.com/starextratravel](http://expressandstar.com/starextratravel)

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions



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## Madeira Winter Sun

Eight days various departure dates

 **PRICE FROM £659**

- Return flights
- Seven nights full-board accommodation
- Included drinks during meals (limited to aperitifs, local wine and beer, soft drinks and local spirits)
- Tours of Funchal and Western Madeira
- Visit to Quintas do Bom Sucesso botanical gardens
- Services of a tour manager/English speaking representative
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782, ATOL 6081)

## The Italian Lakes

Eight nights various departure dates 2016

 **PRICE FROM £729**

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation on Lake Maggiore (four nights) and Lake Garda (three nights)
- Guided tour of Lake Maggiore and the Borromean Islands
- Full day tour of Lake Garda
- Excursion to Lake Como
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)

## Bruges by Eurostar

Four days various departure dates

 **PRICE FROM £279**

- Return standard class seat on Eurostar
- Return rail connection to London
- Return coach transfers overseas
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided walking tour of Bruges
- Visit to a traditional chocolate maker
- Visit to Ypres and the First World War battlefields
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

*Certain entrance fees payable locally*  
Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744)

## Oxford and Blenheim Palace Craft Fair

Two days departing November 21


 **PRICE FROM £129.<sup>95</sup>**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visit and admission to Blenheim Palace including the 'Living Crafts for Christmas' fair
- Visit to Oxford
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

## Manchester Christmas Markets and Coronation Street tour

Two days departing November 21


 **PRICE FROM £119**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Entrance to Coronation Street The Tour
- Visit to the Manchester Christmas markets
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

## Paddy Power Gold Cup

Two days departing November 14

 **PRICE FROM £99**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Entrance to the Best Mate enclosure
- Visit to Bath
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

## Torquay Turkey and Tinsel

Four days departing Nov 20 and Dec 11

 **PRICE FROM £139**


- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Christmas lunch
- Christmas turkey and tinsel programme
- Nightly entertainment at the hotel
- Free time in Torquay
- Visits to Exeter and Exmouth
- Three optional excursions offered
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

## London Theatre by coach

Two days selected weekend departure dates



 **PRICE FROM £139.<sup>95</sup>**

London is the natural home of theatre and the musical is king in the capital's world-famous West End. British musicals that prove a runaway success here often go on to triumph on Broadway and around the globe.

The winning combination of engaging writing, captivating stage design and commanding performance has enabled London theatres to achieve box office smashes time and time again. And it's the songs that make people return to the capital a number of times and some of the most well-known tunes have become part of the national canvas.

There are two options travelling by coach from which to choose, Saturday Night Theatre or a Theatre Weekend with Dinner.

The Saturday Night Theatre break, from £139.95, includes a ticket for the evening show, whereas the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option starts from £149.95 and includes an evening meal following the matinee performance.

Both trips include return coach travel, a choice of theatre ticket from an extensive list of shows, overnight bed and breakfast accommodation in an outer-London four-star hotel, along with some free time in the capital for shopping or sightseeing.

Pick-ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

\*The from price and price bands vary for each show - see brochure/web page for details.

Single room supplements apply.


Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

## The Poppies Weeping Window in Liverpool

Two days departing December 12

**Pick of the week**



 **PRICE FROM £99.<sup>95</sup>**

Join this break and take a moment or two of reflection at the Weeping Window, part of the sea of poppies commemorating the centenary of the start of the First World War.

In London the poppies display attracted over four million visitors to the Tower in 2014, and is sure to be popular again this year in Liverpool.

The cascade of poppies falling from a window in the Tower of London was one of the most evocative images of that momentous installation, and in Liverpool it is being recreated on the outside of St George's Hall this winter.

Whilst in Liverpool there will also be free time for sightseeing or shopping. Maybe visit Albert Dock on the banks of the River Mersey and part of the city's UNESCO World Heritage site. Home to several award winning visitor attractions including the Beatles story, Merseyside Maritime Museum and Tate Liverpool, (entrance fees payable locally).

A visit to historic Chester is also on the itinerary, one of the best preserved walled cities in Britain.

Here see the Roman remains, medieval black and white buildings, the neo-Gothic town hall, the Norman castle with museum, Norman cathedral, the Eastgate clock, said to be the most photographed clock in Britain after Big Ben, plus the Rows containing unique crypt-like shops set below street level.

### INFO

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Opportunity to see the Weeping Window, part of the Tower of London's sea of poppies installation
- Free time in Chester and Liverpool
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)



# Hicks Hadley

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Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management



**HALESOWEN, Romsley Close£850 pcm+Fees**  
A fully newly refurbished extended 4/5 bedroom modern semi-detached house in this very popular central Halesowen location close to local schools. Accommodation comprises of: Entrance hallway, fitted kitchen, utility, large lounge with patio doors, study/5th downstairs bedroom, upstairs family bathroom, 4 good size bedrooms, gas central heating, garage & driveway parking. EPC: TBC



**CRADLEY HEATH, The Crescent£825 pcm+Fees**  
A superbly presented traditional detached family home in the convenient and popular location, close to Haden Hill Park and Leisure Centre. This lovely character home comprises reception hall with minton tiled flooring, attractive lounge, further sitting room with french doors leading to the rear garden, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms and bathroom with corner bath. The property also offers a gated driveway to the rear and a beautiful rear garden with a summer house. EPC: E



**BRIERLEY HILL, Gayfield Avenue£775 pcm+Fees**  
Superb modern & totally refurbished 4 bedroom detached house on this very popular estate. (Withymoor Village) Featuring an entrance hall leading to study room, downstairs w.c, large lounge with separate dining room, fitted kitchen with 'Country Chef' range cooker, 3 double bedrooms & 1 single, family bathroom with shower, garage & driveway. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



**HALESOWEN, Grange Road£750 pcm+Fees**  
A fantastic opportunity to rent this lovely traditional semi-detached house in central Halesowen which is ideal for shops, transport links and access to Birmingham City Centre. This property comprises of: Front reception room with a bay window and feature fireplace, bay windowed rear lounge, modern fitted kitchen, beautiful rear garden, 2 good size bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, garage. EPC: D



**HALESOWEN, Blackberry Lane£695 pcm+Fees**  
A superb recently decorated throughout including new carpets is this 3 bedroom semi-detached house in central Halesowen. This lovely home has a welcoming hallway, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, conservatory, downstairs w.c, 3 good size bedrooms, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, front & rear gardens, driveway parking. EPC: E



**HALESOWEN, Sanderson Place£650 pcm+Fees**  
Luxury living in Hayley Green. A superb ground floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen and diner, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



**HALESOWEN, Talbot Street£575 pcm+Fees**  
A fabulous newly renovated mid-terrace house with complete re-wire, new alarm system, new roof, new 'A' rated Bosch boiler, gas central heating, new carpets & decorated throughout comprising of: 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 3 bedrooms, rear garden, on road parking. Ideally located a short distance from local shops, Cradley Train Station and the number 9 bus route. Available Now. EPC: E



**ROWLEY REGIS, Aqua Court£550 pcm+Fees**  
This new build 2nd floor apartment, a stones throw away from Blackheath town centre comprises 2 double bedrooms, open plan lounge/kitchen with fridge freezer and washer/dryer, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, Juliet balcony, allocated parking space, viewing highly recommended. EPC: B



**HALESOWEN, Talbot Street£525 pcm+Fees**  
●●1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE●● Step inside this fantastic 3 bedroom terrace property and you have the opportunity to be the occupiers of this stunning property. Renovated throughout, featuring a lovely kitchen, fully tiled bathroom, windows & doors, carpets and gas central heating system. The property also benefits from patio doors leading onto the garden and an electric shower over the bath. EPC: E



**HALESOWEN, Whitehall Court£525 pcm+Fees**  
Centrally located to Halesowen Town Centre is this well presented 1st floor flat with private entrance, hallway, kitchen with appliances, living room, bathroom with newly fitted shower, 2 good size bedrooms, communal garden & secure parking to rear of property. Available Now. EPC: C



**HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street North£525 pcm+Fees**  
An unfurnished semi detached house within walking distance of Newfield Park Primary, Windsor High School and Halesowen College. This property features 2 reception rooms, 2 double bedrooms both with fitted wardrobes, downstairs bathroom with shower, upstairs shower room, fitted kitchen, gas central heating, double glazing. EPC: E



**SEDGLEY, Tudor Vale £495 pcm+Fees**  
Located in this ever popular cul-de-sac is this end mews house, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted dining kitchen, downstairs WC, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, unfurnished. EPC: C



**HALESOWEN, Hope Street £495 pcm+Fees**  
A fully refurbished ground floor apartment having spacious lounge, refitted kitchen with integrated oven and hob, 3 bedrooms, refitted bathroom and newly fitted carpets. The apartment has a garage and gardens to front and rear, full double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: D



**TIPTON, Ferguson Drive £480 pcm+Fees**  
A lovely modern 2nd floor apartment which will benefit from a new internal re-decoration before the commencement of a new tenancy. Featuring 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, loft space, electric storage heating, double glazing, 2 allocated parking spaces, communal gardens, internal viewing recommended. Deposit £750. EPC: C



**NETHERTON, Round Street£475 pcm+Fees**  
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi detached house. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, house bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars. In very popular area and good transport links for Merry Hill. 2 MONTHS DEPOSIT AND A GUARANTOR REQUIRED. (THE GUARANTOR MUST BE A HOME OWNER, FAMILY MEMBER AND WORKING) EPC: B



**NETHERTON, Round Street£475 pcm+Fees**  
Situating on a very popular road, and a short walk from local shops and bus links. This re-decorated unfurnished semi detached house features gas central heating, cosy living room, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, driveway parking. 2 MONTHS DEPOSIT AND A GUARANTOR REQUIRED. (THE GUARANTOR MUST BE A HOME OWNER, FAMILY MEMBER AND WORKING) EPC: TBC



**HALESOWEN, Hamilton Avenue£450 pcm+Fees**  
An unfurnished ground floor flat, on a popular development of the Abbey Fields. A lovely apartment which is not to be missed features 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, electric storage heating, double glazing, allocated parking, communal garden. EPC: C



**OLDBURY, Causeway Green Road£425 pcm+Fees**  
Deceptively large and spacious. A split level apartment above local shops, within walking distance to bus links for Langley and Oldbury and close to J2 of the M5 comprises gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking to rear, with the added bonus of a porch, unfurnished. EPC: D



**LYE, High Street £425 pcm+Fees**  
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This split level flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen with a dining area, 2 double bedrooms and a single bedroom, bathroom with shower, its own private garden terrace area, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC



**CRADLEY HEATH, Trinity Street£395 pcm+Fees**  
House share in a large Victorian semi-detached home. Large furnished double bedroom available in this lovely period house, kitchen, bathroom and large lounge are all shared facilities, wi-fi broadband. Rent to include all bills. 2 people sharing will be £100 pcm extra. Available now. EPC: E



**LYE, High Street £395 pcm+Fees**  
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This 2nd floor flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC

## PROPERTY

# House has fitted kitchen and boarded loft room



**HAVING a good sized loft room, this deceptively spacious house in Banners Street, Halesowen, also has a long rear garden.**

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £135,000. It has a reception hall with stairs to first floor, a lounge, spacious dining room with feature fireplace, a fitted kitchen with a range of units and door to the rear garden. On the first floor are three bedrooms, a bathroom, ladder-style stairs to the boarded loft room. A driveway has off-road parking. Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 5856667 or visit [www.hickshadley.com](http://www.hickshadley.com) website.



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It is for sale through The Property Shop at £174,950 with no chain.

A spacious home with gas central heating and double glazing it has as an entrance porch, entrance hall, lounge, sitting/dining room, breakfast room, kitchen with range oven, four bedrooms and in the bathroom is a roll top bath.

There is also a full height cellar, front driveway parking and a low maintenance rear garden with an outside WC.

For further information contact The Property Shop on 01384 456022 or visit [www.theproper tyshop.co.uk](http://www.theproper tyshop.co.uk)







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# 7

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# RS4 – an object of desire

By John Griffiths

**There's are good reasons why younger riders are restricted to two-wheelers with limited power: but that doesn't mean they have to be dull.**

That's certainly not an adjective you could apply to Aprilia's RS125, a sharply-styled replica of the Italian company's RS V4 superbike racing machine.

Indeed, at first glance it could easily be mistaken for a one-litre machine - until you notice the extra space in the frame where there's a single cylinder in place of the expected four. It's certainly a bike to attract envious glances from riders in their late teens and early 20s who make up the target market.

But it does borrow extensively from Aprilia's impressive record of producing world class racing machines in terms of technology, aerodynamics, chassis and handling.

At £4,571 it certainly isn't cheap for this class of bike, but you are getting a race-bred machine which will turn heads and put a smile on your face, albeit with the 15bhp power limit necessary for younger riders.

This restriction is a great leveller in performance terms, but as a subjective opinion the Aprilia has the edge in terms of style and handling.

It's light and very nimble, and with its super-slick six-speed gearbox is quite capable of reaching 65mph on level ground.

And it does it so well: even with just 125cc on tap, brisk acceleration produces a sporty bark rather than a strangled-by-the-exhaust gasp of less flamboyant machines. The sin-

gle piston revs willingly up to the 10,500rpm limit.

Top gear is pitched fairly high, so smaller, lighter riders may get to use it more often than me. It's a useful dual carriageway cruising gear, helping to make the theoretical 270 mile range from the 3.5 gallon tank a reality.

The original, and hugely popular, RS4's two-stroke engine was replaced in 2011 by the current fuel injected four stroke to help meet stricter emissions regulations.

The RS 125 has a proud heritage, with a host of championship wins in its class in the hands of riders such as Biaggi, Stoner and Lorenzo and the development of the road-going replica's version has certainly reaped the benefits of lessons learned from the race machine's evolution.

One area in which it stands out is in braking: given the power restriction Aprilia hasn't skimped on the anchors with a 300mm disc and four piston calipers at the front, and a 218mm disc at the rear. The 17-inch wheels are shod with a generously-sized 100/80 tyre at the front and a 130/70 at the rear.

The chassis is also based on the racing machine: tough yet light for precise handling.

The test bike's single racing seat is a reasonably comfortable example of its kind, the pillion portion having been replaced by a colour-coded shell.

The forward riding position means you're low enough to benefit from the wind protection of the aerodynamic fairing, proving that its functional as well as an eye-catching piece of design.

While it might not be the cheapest race replica in the 125cc class, the RS4 has the looks and abilities to make it an object of desire among those new to motorcycling.



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# Micra's loaded



By Sharon Walters

Nissan is expanding its value-packed Micra range with a new equipment-laden N-TEC model. Positioned between the existing Acenta and Tekna models, the new Micra N-TEC offers buyers the chance to experience some of Nissan's acclaimed technology features at a great price.

Priced from £12,400 and available to order now, the new Micra N-TEC is available with the same advanced engine line-up as other models in the range.

That means customers can choose between the entry-level 1.2-litre petrol engine that produces 80PS, or the

supercharged 1.2-litre DIG-S unit that develops 98PS. The former is available with Nissan's smooth CVT automatic transmission as an option.

The new Micra N-TEC's generous equipment list includes the latest-generation NissanConnect system.

Accessed via a 5.8-inch colour touchscreen display, the N-TEC's NissanConnect system includes satellite navigation and smartphone integration.

It also comes with advanced features such as Google Send-To-Car technology, which allows an owner to plan a journey on their PC or tablet at home or in the office and then send the instructions to the car ahead of the journey.

And the gadget-count doesn't end there. The Micra n-tec's equipment list also includes Rear Parking Sensors and Parking Slot Measurement. These two features work together to help drivers find the perfect parking space.

Parking Slot Measurement lives up

to its name by measuring parking slots and alerting the driver via a dashboard display as to whether New Micra can be safely parked in the space or not.

The system can even be adjusted to account for the driver's skill – amateur, normal or expert.

Other technologies fitted as standard to the new Micra N-TEC include automatic climate control, rain sensing windscreen wipers and automatic headlights. The Micra N-TEC also looks the part thanks to a host of premium styling features that include 16-inch alloy wheels, front fog lamps and its rear privacy glass.

Silver satin door mirrors and door handles complete the exterior design package. Inside, the N-TEC stands out from the crowd with a centre console finished in gloss black and distinctive blue stitching on the trim and leather-covered steering wheel.

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# Even better performance and running costs down

By James Parker

The Dacia Duster is now even more 'shockingly affordable' to run with the introduction of a brand new EU6-compliant 1.6 16V 115 petrol engine which improves performance, reduces fuel consumption and CO2 emissions, significantly reduces running costs and improves the towing capacity of 4x2 models. It replaces the previous 1.6 16V 105 engine.

With its arrival, Dacia now offers a greater number of petrol-engined models in the Duster line-up. Mid-range Ambiance 4x2 and 4x4 versions have been added, giving a more progressive and logical product line. Previously, only entry-level Access models were offered with a petrol engine. The new Ambiance versions are priced at £10,495 (4x2) and £12,495 (4x4). The new petrol engine is also fitted to Access versions, which are priced at £9,495 (4x2) and £11,495 (4x4).

There are also reductions in fuel consumption and emissions for Duster models powered by the dCi 110 turbodiesel engine, which now meets EU6 emissions standards. As with the new petrol engine, this has the effect of lowering the VED band of every model.

There are also improvements to the fuel economy and emissions of most models in the Sandero family and the Logan MCV with the adoption of EU6 engines.

The 115hp 1.6-litre 16-valve engine is a brand new unit, not simply an EU6 version of the petrol engine previously fitted to the Duster. It develops 10hp more than its predecessor at 5,500rpm and has an extra 8Nm of torque – now 156Nm at 4,000rpm. This trims the 0-62mph acceleration time of 4x2 versions from 11.5 to 11 seconds, while for 4x4 models the reduction is 0.8 seconds to 12 seconds. The top speeds rise by 1mph and 5mph respectively.

By far the greatest gains are in fuel efficiency and running costs, however. For 4x4 versions, CO2 emissions tumble by 30g/km to 155g/km, while NEDC fuel consumption has been reduced by 6.2mpg and is now 41.5mpg. This is sufficient to slash the annual VED cost by £170 to £180. There are substantial gains with 4x2 models, too: CO2 falls by 20g/km to 145g/km, fuel economy improves by 4.3mpg to 44.1mpg and the yearly VED charge is £35 less at £145. The increase in power and torque also raises the towing capacity of 4x2 versions from 1,200 to 1,500kg so that it is now on a par with that of the 4x4 versions. Benefit-in-kind (BIK) taxation is four bands lower with all-wheel drive and two bands lower with front-wheel drive.

The new engine is a 1,598cc unit with multi-point fuel injection, driving through a five-speed manual gearbox in 4x2 models and a six-speed manual in the 4x4s. Engine stop and start is standard.

## Efficiency

The advent of EU6 emissions controls also brings improvements in the fuel efficiency and running costs of Duster models powered by the 1.5-litre dCi 110 turbodiesel engine, which now has 20Nm more torque at 260Nm.

NEDC combined fuel consumption is now 64.2mpg (-7.7mpg) in 4x2 models and 60.1mpg (-6.8mpg) in 4x4s; CO2 emissions are down to 115g/km (-15g/km) and 123g/km (-12g/km) respectively; and every model is one band lower in the VED and BIK scales.

With the introduction of petrol-engined Ambiance models for the first time, Dacia now offers 10 versions of the Duster in a more progressive and logical range.

There are two entry-level Access models (4x2 and 4x4), both powered by the new 1.6 16V 115 engine; mid-range Ambiance trim is available with both engines and both drive-lines; and at the top of the range there are Lauréate and Lauréate Prime versions, all diesel, in 4x2 and 4x4 formats.

EU6 engines also bring greater efficiency and lower running costs to Dacia's other models in the UK – the Sandero, Sandero Stepway and Logan MCV.

The 1.2-litre 16V 75 engine in the Sandero and Logan MCV now attracts zero VED (previously £130) with a reduction in CO2 emissions from 135g/km to 130g/km. The power output is 73hp and the 107Nm of torque now peaks at a much lower 4,250rpm, improving performance. Fuel economy is unchanged at 48.7mpg.

With the 0.9-litre TCe 90 engine available in all three models, torque has risen from 135Nm to 140Nm, and stop and start is now standard. CO2 emissions are down by 7g/km to 109g/km in the Sandero and Logan MCV, and by 9g/km to 115g/km in the Stepway, while the respective fuel economy improvements are 1.2mpg to 57.7mpg, and 3.1mpg to 55.4mpg.

All three cars are also available with the popular 1.5 dCi 90, and this also needs less fuel and produces lower emissions with the switch to EU6 controls. For the Sandero and Logan MCV, economy improves from 74.3mpg to 80.7mpg, with CO2 emissions down from 99g/km to 90g/km; in the Stepway economy goes up from 70.6mpg to 74.3mpg, with CO2 down from 105g/km to 98g/km.

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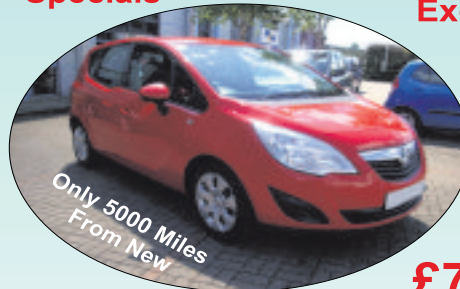
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# Will petrol become a fuel for enthusiasts in future?

There are all manner of alternative fuels being touted as the best replacement for petrol. From electric energy and hydrogen to compressed air, all seek to supply greener, cleaner power for our cars.

However, anyone writing the obituary of petrol would do well to stay their pen as reports of its demise are more than a little premature.

Depending on who you speak to and who you choose to believe, fossil fuels have a future of anywhere between 30 and 100 years.

The reasons for such a huge variation in expert estimates are down to the cost of extracting the fuel from the ground. There will come a point where accessing oil to refine into petrol and diesel will simply no longer be cost-effective on a large scale.

However, this does not mean we will see the end of petrol even then. In the short term, there will still be plenty of cars running around that need petrol for their engines, even if those engines are assisted by a hybrid power source. Another longer term outcome for petrol is that it will become a fuel used by enthusiasts for their cherished vehicles. It may well be much more expensive than it presently is, despite many thinking fuel is too pricey already.

Fans of the combustion engine, and all the power, noise and fun it offers, will still be drawn to petrol as the fuel of choice. Instead of running their everyday car on unleaded, they will have an up-to-date alternative fuel car and save the good stuff for the weekend when they can go cruising, racing or just having fun in their petrol-powered pet car. Just as we see classic cars nowa-



days being run on petrol mixed with additives to protect elderly engines, so future drivers will regard petrol as something to use in a car that's a hobby, not a daily proposition.

Enthusiasts may also have to accept some limitations to using their petrol-fuelled fun cars. For instance the mayor of Paris has banned all cars built before 1997 from the city centre in a bid to clear up air pollution. This could mean petrol heads being restricted by where and when they can drive, but given the passion for petrol-powered cars, it seems likely they will be allowed some freedom to enjoy their pastime.

For those who see this as ridiculous and argue it is allowing a polluting few

to enjoy themselves at the expense of the many, the number of miles covered by classic car owners is small and their vehicles are generally maintained to a very high standard. The impact of a group of enthusiasts enjoying petrol-engined cars in the future will be very small.

Given the cost of petrol in such a world will be very high, owners of such cars will be unlikely to cover large distances anyway.

While the demise of petrol may have been exaggerated in recent times, it is undoubtedly set to become a less common fuel in the decades ahead. However, there will always be a place for it among enthusiasts' that will see it remain for a long time to come.

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**By Ian Donaldson**

**Style seems to win most battles these days when a family decides more room is needed to keep the kids happy in the back of the car.**

It's a victory often won by a big, tall bruiser of a car that looks ready for the urban jungle or a trip up the nearest mountain. An SUV in other words; something that adds a touch of the big outdoors to the daily grind.

But there is an alternative. It won't gather admiring glances at the school gates but it will almost certainly be cheaper to run, more practical and, if you're only moderately lucky, be much nicer to drive.

Which brings us to the latest version of the Ford Grand C-MAX, fresh from a mid-life makeover and about as trim as a sensible seven seater ever could, with Ford's handsome new grille (looking more than ever like an Aston Martin) and sharper style to the headlights, while Ford watching anoraks will spot a simpler look to the rear.

Inside, there is a hike in apparent quality of the materials you touch or look at, along with fewer switches and a big touch screen in the manner of the latest Ford Focus.

Under the bonnet the big news is the availability of a new 1.5 litre diesel engine that produces more power and fewer pollutants than the larger, 1.6 litre unit it replaces.

You can also choose from two versions of Ford's fine 1.0 litre EcoBoost petrol engine or a 2.0 litre diesel. Prices range from £20,295 to £27,615 and are £1,600 more than Ford asks for the smaller C-MAX, which looks a reasonable premium for the Grand C-MAX's third row of seats and the convenience of sliding rear doors in place of the conventionally opening pair on the 14cms (5.5 inches) shorter car.

Both models have more than 20 storage spaces scattered around the cabin, which should be quieter thanks to thicker side window glass, more absorbent seals on the tailgate and extra soundproofing under the bonnet, with extra attention paid to the diesel models.

#### Features

Depending on version, you will find as standard, or optional, safety features that include a blind spot information system, lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition and adaptive cruise control that can warn when you are too close to the vehicle in front.

But most Fords of recent years have stood out from the pack for the way they drive. It's not, as an engineer from a rival company once told me, that others could not make their cars nicer to drive, it's just that they had other priorities.

So good for Ford to find that the latest C-MAX and Grand C-MAX have been lightly breathed on to make them still better from behind the wheel, with gentle massaging of dampers, suspension bushes and power steering settings.

The result, with the new 118bhp diesel engine doing the work in a £23,145 Titanium spec Grand C-MAX is a car that drives like something much smaller and less accommodating of five adults plus a couple of growing children in the third row.

It is so much removed from the rock and roll lifestyle of a typical SUV as to feel like a car from another planet. A dashboard readout of 44mpg after a brisk outing was further proof that fun and family need not be mutually exclusive.



#### TESTED

**Ford Grand C-MAX 1.5 TDCI Titanium**  
**Engine:** 118bhp diesel  
**Warranty:** Three years, 60,000 mileage  
**Economy:** The Grand C-MAX can do 64.2 mpg  
**Insurance group:** 16  
**Price:** £23,145



# Results are the priority for Albion, says Olsson

JONAS OLSSON claims results must always come before performances as Albion gear up for Saturday's derby at Villa.

The Baggies have scored just three goals this season and their playing style has come in for criticism from some supporters. But with Tony Pulis' team having taken four points from the last two league games, defender Olsson insists results must come before anything else.

"Of course you always want to score more," he said. "It's important to get the defence right which we have and we've been doing really well with that since the gaffer came in.

"You always want to score more and play attractive football, but at the end of the day what matters is getting results. You want to play attractive as well, but there's no balance between results and attractive football.

"After results, everything else is secondary."

A veteran of 10 Albion-Villa derbies, Olsson knows exactly what to expect this weekend.

The Swedish international scored the last time the Baggies beat Villa on their own turf in 2011. It remains their only win at Villa Park in 36 years and Albion will be looking avenge last year's two defeats, when they were beaten twice in the space of four days by their rivals in the league and FA Cup. Olsson said: "It's always up there with the games of the season.

"I always enjoy the atmosphere and everything around the derby game.

"I am hoping to get a better result than last year."

# Cradley show why they are top of table

**Cradley Town 3 Tipton Town 0**

TABLE-WISE, top versus bottom, this West Midlands Premier fixture went with the form book.

It proved another step too far for the young Tipton Town side, as their more experienced opponents cantered home in style.

Tipton's youngsters did well to hold Cradley to a single goal in the first half, Scott Stevenson's rocket too good for Josh Morgan in the visitors' goal. The young keeper went on to make several splendid saves in his worthy effort to keep his side in contention.

But Cradley's strength and experience really told after the break as they wrapped up the points through a Will Tibbetts header on 56 minutes and a quite brilliant strike by Adam Meacham 12 minutes from time.

# Villa outfoxed to let lead slip



Villa's Jack Grealish scores their first goal of the game

**Leicester 3 Villa 2**

NATHAN DYER's brave late header completed a remarkable comeback by Leicester as they climbed to second place in the Premier League table with a 3-2 home win against Villa.

Goals from Ritchie De Laet, whose effort was given with the aid of goal-line technology, Jamie Vardy and substitute Dyer, making his debut following his loan arrival from Swansea during the international break, saw Claudio

Ranieri's men snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Winger Dyer remained on the ground for a couple of minutes after clattering into goalkeeper Brad Guzan when heading the 89th-minute clincher, but eventually got to his feet to take the acclaim.

Greashish spurned a terrific chance to give Villa the lead in the 24th minute when he steered his shot straight at Kasper Schmeichel. But when presented

with a similar opportunity just before half-time, the youngster did not make the same error.

Leicester emerged for the second half full of vigour. It was somewhat against the run of play when Villa extended their lead, Gil guided a lovely curling shot into the top corner of the net from 22 yards.

De Laet halved Leicester's deficit. Danny Drinkwater's low cross was poked home by Vardy.

Dyer bravely got between two Villa defenders to head home.

# Confident Old Hales side take the points

**Syston 13 Old Hales 31**

**OLD Hales travelled to Syston this week, both teams with much-deserved confidence following successful starts to their campaigns.**

Straight from the off, Max Macfarlane set the standard with a devastating break from his own half into Syston's 22.

Two quick phases orchestrated by Dave Hadkiss put Luke Smith in the corner for a try. Chris Hooper missed the conversion.

A slick pass from Dave Hadkiss put Luke Smith in the corner for his second try, again the conversion was missed. Syston forced a penalty and decided to take the points. There was a spell of Syston possession and a well-deserved converted try with 12 minutes left of the half. Syston continued to add pressure with their kicking game forcing a penalty, taking the points and taking the lead. Lawrence Breeze and Tom King took control to mount a quick response with strong powerful runs into the Syston 22 from the restart.

**Party**

Peter Fitzgerald joined the party and drove hard into the Syston defence scoring a try under the posts.

Chris Hooper, finding his focus and converting just before half time. Talisman, Dave Hadkiss, drummed up the phases supplying Max Macfarlane for his first try in an Old Hales shirt. Converted by Hooper. Driving Syston deep into their 22. Three unforgiving scrums from the Old Hales pack, five yards from the try line, gave Owen Jones the platform to pick up from the base to score a converted try.

With 20 minutes left to play a young Syston team refused to lie down for the rest of the game. Old Hales calmed a second bonus score win. Old Hales play their first home game of the season this Saturday against Old Northamptonians at 3pm.

Old Hales 2nds 26 Syston 2nds 5

From the outset it was clear the two teams were well-matched, with the exception of the set piece scrum which Old Hales controlled all game.

The first 20 minutes were closely fought, with Hales' open side Sol Rogers making some bone crunching tackles. The first score came after 23 minutes through No.8 Alex Gordon

# Concerns over Albion's form



**Salomon Rondon of West Bromwich Albion smacks the pitch with his hand in frustration**

**Albion 0 Southampton 0**

THIS was another torpid game involving Albion, which while yielding a first home point, further added to a growing sense of unease and dissatisfaction at how this season is developing.

Five games in, Tony Pulis' side still feel a team who have yet to get going, solid enough at the back but lacking any spark in the final third.

Pulis felt Berahino got a 'great reception' after coming on as a 55th-minute substitute and while that might have been something of a slight exaggeration, for there were some boos, the response from the crowd was nowhere near what some at the club would have been fearing over the past fortnight.

Berahino's performance, meanwhile, bore the hallmarks of a player who had not played for four

# Heathens' campaign ends on a high note

CRADLEY defied their injury crisis to end their National League campaign on a high with a dramatic 40-35 win at Stoke.

The Heathens were forced to take on the Potters with only five riders having seen Ellis Perks (hand) and Tyler Govier (ankle) both crash out of their clash with Coventry earlier in the day.

Although they drafted in Darryl Ritchings as a guest, they were unable to find a replacement for Govier at short notice – and when Michael Neale was forced to pull out due to a lack of equipment following an earlier crash they were reduced to just four riders.

Matt Williamson and Arron Mogridge plus guesting duo Ben Morley and Ritchings nonetheless fought tirelessly to give them a five-point lead before a power failure saw the meeting called to a halt after 13 heats.

Earlier Cradley pulled off a last-gasp 5-1 to secure a consolation league point from their 48-44 defeat at Coventry.

Skipper Williamson combined with star guest Ben Morley in the final race after keeping them in the hunt two heats earlier. Williamson was in stunning form, notching 16 points.

said: "We wanted to win the match obviously but to lose both Ellis and Tyler to injury during the meeting and Mike Neale suffering bike problems we pulled together in those two heats and got the job done.

COVENTRY 48: Darryl Ritchings 11, Martin Knuckey 9, Conor Dwyer 7+2, Rob Shuttleworth 7, Mark Baseby 6+3, Danny Ayres 5+1, Jamie Halder 3.

CRADLEY 44: Matt Williamson

# Baggies fans told to move on from Saido

FORMER Albion star Peter Odemwingie believes Baggies fans must put the Saido Berahino saga behind them and support their want-away striker – for the good of the club.

Odemwingie also lifted the lid on his own collapsed move to Queens Park Rangers from Albion two years ago and his own unhappiness with chairman Jeremy Peace over the wrangle which left him as target for fans' abuse.

Odemwingie – who famously drove to QPR on deadline day in January 2013 to try and push through a move – said: "There's a difference in playing for Jeremy Peace and playing for West Bromwich Albion.

"The fans are the most important people.

"They always will be" Chairmen come and go, players come and go ... he is just a young boy."

# Final whistle



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## First defeat of campaign for Blues

### Blues 0 Notts Forest 1

DEXTER BLACKSTOCK has taken on the goalscoring mantle for Nottingham Forest and responded with the only strike in an impressive 1-0 away win to inflict Birmingham City's first defeat of the season.

Blackstock, the Antigua and Bermuda international, had generally been kept in tight check but in the 54th minute popped up to notch the vital game to give Forest their second win in four days.

Clayton Donaldson's goalscoring form, however, deserted him after his hat-trick at the weekend and went a long way to explain Blues' setback.

Blues' newly-acquired confidence had been reflected in their early play when they launched a series of promising attacks but the game developed into a midfield battle.

Neither side committed to defence and consequently that led to a quick, open game but no early clear-cut chances.

Surprisingly Blues rested rising star Demarai Gray, giving him a spot on the bench from where he emerged in the 63rd minute in an attempt to inject more attacking options.

It was obvious in the early stages that Blues lacked his individual skill and penetration against a solid Forest defence in which Matt Mills and Kelvin Wilson did well.

The pair were obviously intent on shutting out the goal threat of Donaldson who was accorded few opportunities to replicate his performance from the previous game against Bristol City.

Forest were obviously boosted by their welcome win over QPR and played with plenty of vigour as they were quick to break from defence.

## Kenny's challenge to McDonald to win his team spot back

WOLVES boss Kenny Jackett challenged midfielder Kevin McDonald to win his place back after surprisingly dropping the Scot for Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Bolton.

McDonald travelled north to the Macron Stadium but wasn't even named as a substitute, with George Saville preferred on the bench.

The 26-year-old is out of contract next summer and has publicly expressed his dissatisfaction about the offer Wolves have put on the table. It led to the 'unsettled' midfielder being left out of a pre-season game at Burton.

However, Jackett insisted McDonald was left out purely on his recent form.

"I decided to play only two of the three midfield players I've been playing," Jackett said. "With the return to fitness of Wallace, Nathan Byrne coming into the group, I went for two of the three midfield players and then genuine wide players."

"It's been a tough period for Kevin, with those very well-publicised contract negotiations. It was unfortunately him that was left out on the form of Conor Coady and David Edwards."

## Griffiths and Collins book Yeltz place

### FA Cup 1st Qualifying Round Halesowen Town 2 Mickleover Sports 1

TWO stunning goals from Aaron Griffiths and substitute Connor Collins booked Halesowen's FA Cup 2nd Qualifying Round place.

Mickleover enjoyed the better of early play as Gary Ricketts lofted over the bar and Anthony Griffiths Junior curled a 31st minute free-kick just wide.

But Halesowen took command before the interval and went close when Keyon Refell's low shot struck the post.

Griffiths then put Halesowen ahead after 43

### Football

minutes with a golden 30-yard volley into the middle of goal in a worthy candidate for the goal of the season.

At the start of the second period Greg Pearson missed a perfect chance to put the tie to bed when clear of the Mickleover goal.

Mickleover's search for an equaliser encountered a well-marshalled home defence, although Ricketts fired wide and home goalkeeper Dan Platt grabbed the ball following a goal-line clearance before also collecting from key Mickleover

substitute Anthony O'Neil Dwyer. O'Neil-Dwyer claimed Mickleover's 80th minute equaliser with a low shot after the visitors launched a series of long throw ins and O'Neil-Dwyer then fired inches over the bar with the home goal under some siege.

But with the tie looking all set for a replay, Collins smashed home Halesowen's last-gasp 89th minute winner from 15 yards after Refell chased a long ball to pressurise Jake Bennett and the visiting defence.

Halesowen Town: Platt; Connolly (Gueyes 87), Griffiths, Denny (c), Hull, Morrison, Charlton, Westwood, Pearson (Collins 68), Refell, Hales.

# WHILEY MAKES TENNIS HISTORY

## HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley put friendship to one side to make history by becoming the first British woman to win a Grand Slam wheelchair tennis title.

The British No.1 defeated Japan's Yui Kamiji, her doubles partner, 6-4 0-6 6-1 to clinch the US Open title at Flushing Meadow on Sunday night.

Whiley admitted it was strange going up against Kamiji, with whom she has won six Grand Slam doubles titles.

"It really hasn't sunk in that I've done it," said Whiley. "I felt bad seeing her crying at the end but that's tennis and I knew I could win it."

In a game of fluctuating fortunes, Whiley saw an early break advantage disappear in the first set, only to regroup and take the last two games to seize the initiative. Kamiji then raced through the second set but Whiley returned from a comfort break before the final set with a renewed focus and stormed into a 5-0 lead.

### Thrilling

Whiley then had her first five match points before Kamiji pulled a game back, but another thrilling final game saw the Brit clinch a famous victory on her ninth championship point.

The 23-year-old is now No.4 in the world the back of the victory, her highest-ever singles ranking.

With next year's Rio Olympics a long-term target, Whiley has vowed this title won't be her last.

"I kept telling everyone that I could do it in singles as well and now I've finally proved it," she added. "I've always said to people that I'm not just a doubles player, I am a singles player and one day I'll show you."

Whiley has described her whirlwind 24 hours after winning the US Open.

The 23-year-old has won all four Slams on the doubles circuit.

But such has been the attention surrounding the star since her victory, she has barely had a minute to celebrate.

"It has been very hectic but very enjoyable," Whiley said. "I came off the court and literally



Jordanne Whiley can hardly believe her historic victory in the Grand Slam singles final

jumped straight on a plane and I have been doing media interviews ever since.

"I'm used to doing interviews because of the success I have had in doubles, but it does feel very different this time."

"People have been starting to recognise me and congratulate me. Everyone has been lovely."

Whiley's hectic schedule means she has no time to rest as she prepares to fly out for a tournament in Sardinia, Italy, on Monday.

"I've got a few tournaments coming up in Europe and then it's the Masters, which is being held at the Olympic Park," she said.

"Then I have got to go to Rio for a training

camp which prepares members of Team GB for the conditions they are going to face at the Olympics."

Having won her first Grand Slam singles title, Whiley says her aim is to now to win a lot more together with a gold medal in Brazil next year.

"You have to take it one tournament at a time but the aim has to be to win more Slams," she said.

"And of course there is Rio next year so I will go there with every intention of returning home with a gold medal."

"It was a dream to win at Flushing Meadows and now the Olympics is the next big dream."

## Penalties put the Tivs out of cup

### Tividale FC 2 Stafford Rangers 2 (Stafford win 4-1 on pens)

TIVIDALE again fell just short in a game that they twice led but in the end it was the dreaded penalties that cost them a place in the First round of the Doodson cup.

On 36 minutes Tividale took the lead. A dreadful clearance from Rangers full back Alex Melbourne fell to the feet of Aarron O'Neill, who whipped the ball back into the Rangers area.

Brown controlled the cross, held off his marker and laid the ball off to his strike partner Joel Ayetey who made no mistake.

On the stroke of half time Rooney lashed home a loose ball from the edge of the box through a crowded penalty area and into the bottom corner of Jay's goal.

Six minutes into the second half Tividale regained the lead when Jackson raced through on goal and fired across Whitehouse and into the net.

On 71 minutes Rangers pegged Tividale back again when substitute Josh Craddock played in Peter Till who beat Jay.

The last 15 minutes could have gone either way with both teams having chances to win the tie. Striker Fabrice Kasiana was tackled before he could get a shot off Chris Sterling found the back of the net but was flagged offside.

Stafford's Till took the first one and scored 0-1. Sterling equalised for Tividale, though Whitehouse got a hand to it, 1-1. Kasiana put Stafford back in front, 1-2. Tividale's Mark Danks then cleared the bar with his, 1-2 and Ryan Edmunds made it 1-3 to Stafford. Chris Rabone then also put his over the bar, 1-3 and Stafford's McNaught sent Stafford through.

## Baggies run the rule over Ricardo

ALBION have taken former West Ham and Bolton forward Ricardo Vaz Te on trial.

Vaz Te is training with the Baggies as Tony Pulis looks at beefing up his strike-force. The 28-year-old has been without a club since leaving Turkish side Akhisar Belediyespor. The Portuguese star left West Ham in January after three years at Upton Park following 19 goals in 61 games.

Albion have scored just three times this season and drew a blank in Saturday's dull draw with Southampton.

Boss Pulis missed out on his No.1 target Matt Phillips from QPR.

★★★

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